

Silver Issue

Yearbook:
The Historical Society
of Fairfax County, Virginia
Volume 25
1995-1996



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Editors

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Front Cover: Portrait of Thomas ap Catesby Jones as a young officer. Gift to the U.S. Naval Academy from the estate of the late Martha Reading Kreamer, a Jones descendant, of Black Mountain, North Carolina. Artist unknown.

Back Cover: U.S. ship *Ohio*, "Bearing the broad Pendant of Commodore Ap Catesby Jones"—Built in New York in 1820, 2542 tons, 74 guns. Artist unknown.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE.

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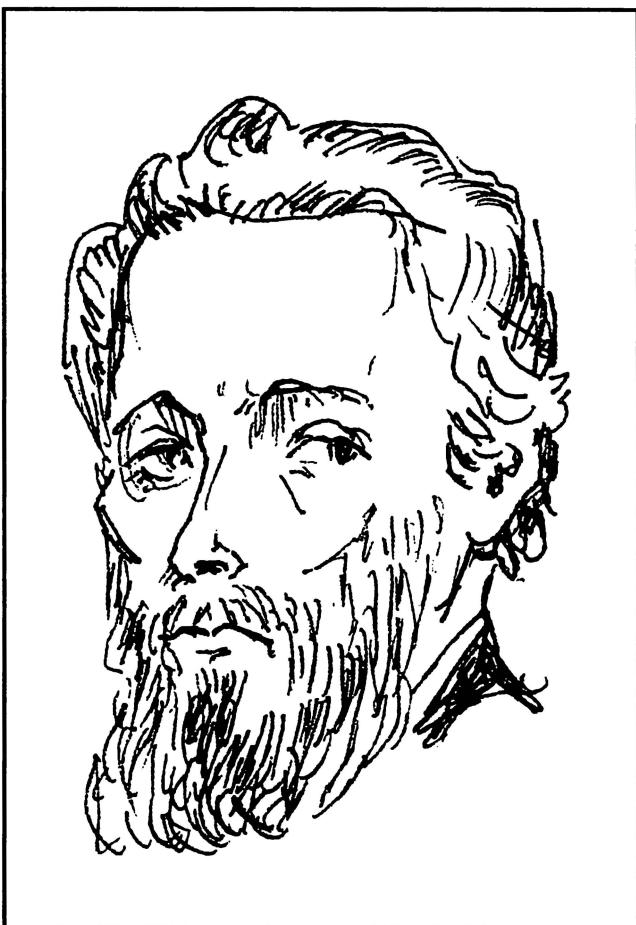
Introduction

The editors proudly present this silver issue of the *Yearbook*, commemorating twenty-five volumes of Fairfax County history published by the Society since 1951. This collection of informative and entertaining articles is a valuable resource for genealogists and historians, scholars and students, and anyone with an interest in local history. Included in this issue is a list of the titles of articles that appeared in the previous twenty-four volumes. Several early issues of the *Yearbook* are out of print, but many are still available from the Librarian at the Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives.

With Volume 25, the editors have changed the style of presenting historical events. Articles in previous issues emphasized "what" occurred; this issue explores, to a greater degree, the "why." As we follow the collision course on which Commodore Jones and the novelist Herman Melville faced each other, we can better understand the political and social anxieties in the decade preceding the Civil War. We witness an emotional parting as Griffin Dobson, born a slave, leaves his master for the gold fields of California, there to prosper and to return to Fairfax County to buy his family their freedom. We see drunkenness and a family dispute result in murder and a sentence of death for the mill owner William H. Keene. We know, too, with certainty, that the astuteness and ambition of one of Fairfax County's most influential public servants, Richard Ratcliffe, determined the location of the county courthouse from 1800 to the present, and the city which is the county seat. It is these areas of research and discovery, the "human factors," that characterize much of Volume 25.

The full story of Fairfax County's history has not yet been told. The thousands of records in courthouses, manuscripts in public and university libraries, letters, diaries, and family papers of descendants of Fairfax County's earlier residents, are a rich and marvelous road to the past on which we can all travel at our own pace. They comprise a virtually unlimited resource which offers excitement and surprises for the storyteller each of us can be.

Constance K. Ring
Edith Moore Sprouse
Editors



Herman Melville. Drawing by Duane McKenna after a black half-tone reproduction of an oil painting by Joseph Eaton in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Jones and Melville: Encounter in the Pacific, 1843

by
Frank W. Gapp

Mr. Gapp has had a long professional career in writing and publishing, having been an editor at U.S. News & World Report for thirty-one years. He has written extensively on the life of Thomas ap Catesby Jones and is currently the historian at the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church.

Heroism did not come easily to Thomas ap Catesby Jones, the commodore from Fairfax County, Virginia. Much of what he tried to do in the Navy was opposed—by his crew, his superiors, the British, or events.

The United States was a young country, and George Washington had been president for only a year, when Thomas was born. He was fifteen years old when, in 1805, he signed up for the Navy as a midshipman, an officer in training. He was told there was no place for him at that time. The country was at peace. President Jefferson advocated a policy of nonaggression, with a Navy based on small gunboats that would protect the harbors of the nation's ports. Jones was urged to find employment in the merchant service “during which furlough he was to dress as a private gentlemen.”¹

Jones did visit several seaports, but couldn't find an advantageous position. Meanwhile, the fortunes of the United States Navy changed. The British, fighting Napoleon, needed crew. Their ships prowled the U.S. coasts looking for sailors who had been, a few years before, subjects of the king but now claimed to be citizens of the new country. On June 22, 1807, the British warship *Leopard*, fifty guns, stopped the U.S. frigate *Chesapeake*, thirty-eight guns and a crew of three hundred and seventy seamen, as it left Hampton Roads on its way to the Mediterranean, unprepared for battle.² Under the command of Commodore James Barron, the *Chesapeake* sailed before all guns had been placed on their carriages and all equipment stowed for the voyage. The *Leopard* demanded the surrender of some of the *Chesapeake*'s crew. When the demands were not immediately met, the *Leopard* came alongside and fired shots into the unresisting vessel for at least twenty minutes, killing three seamen and wounding eighteen. Badly dam-

aged and carrying three and a half feet of water in the hold, the *Chesapeake* limped back into Hampton Roads.

The country was inflamed. Suddenly the Navy needed young officers. Catesby Jones wrote to the Secretary of the Navy on June 27th to say that he had not found a place in the merchant service and was available for immediate entry in the Navy. In less than a week he was ordered to present himself to Captain Stephen Decatur in Norfolk, where he reported on July 25, 1807. The hulk of the *Chesapeake*, just across the bay from the training grounds, was to remain a challenge to young Jones for the rest of his life. Under the famous Stephen Decatur, Jones trained for six months at the Gosport Navy Yard. When he was slated for active service, he requested assignment to a frigate for sea experience, but he was sent instead to the Gulf of Mexico where he spent the next several years in command of gun-boats, chasing smugglers, pirates, blockade runners and other violators during Jefferson's administration. By 1812, Jones had achieved the rank of lieutenant.

In September of 1814, when a strong British naval force began to assemble in the Gulf of Mexico, the Americans defending New Orleans worried about the pirate Jean Lafitte, who was harrying commerce on the southern flank of the U.S. Believing that Lafitte might interfere with U.S. defense plans, the Americans launched a joint Army-Navy operation against Lafitte's base at Barataria. In that assault, Jones's gunboat attacked one of the larger ships of the pirate fleet. Although the ship, the *Caroline*, had been set afire and was in danger of exploding, Jones led his crew in a daring sortie that boarded the ship amidst the flames. Jones himself rushed to the powder train burning near the magazine and extinguished the blaze before a disastrous explosion would have killed everyone on board. He was rewarded with command of a five-gunboat flotilla protecting an attack route across Lake Borgne.

Late in the War of 1812, the British sent an expeditionary force to the Gulf Coast to attack New Orleans. The flotilla that gathered there in November of 1814 had sixty-two vessels of all sizes and functions led by the huge ship of the line *HMS Tonant*.³ Although close to Mobile, giving General Andrew Jackson the idea that the attack might be in that area, the armada intended to attack across the shallow waters of Lake Borgne (Half-Blind Lake) and land in the bayous behind the defenses of New Orleans. The British ships carried veterans of the Napoleonic Wars, a full complement of sailors and marines, and also civil officials to run the city and the Louisiana territory once the British had secured control.

The waters of Lake Borgne were too shallow for the British frigates, so an attack force was placed in forty-two longboats, each carrying a carronade at the prow with twenty armed sailors at the oars of each boat. They rowed all night, and by the morning of December 14, 1814, were nearing a spot on the lake just out of range of Jones's force of five gunboats blocking their path from Malheureux Island to the Louisiana coast. It was a small force to oppose such a large flotilla. Jones had only one hundred eighty-two men, and each boat had only three or four guns. A British historian wrote:⁴

Jones had to deal with a force five times the size of his own, and to escape he had only to run his boats on shore, but he prepared very coolly for battle.

It was close to 11 a.m. when, after finishing breakfast and resting briefly, the British began the attack, rowing fiercely toward the American gunboats. Commander Nicholas Lockyer of the British sloop *Sophie* led the attack, and his longboats grappled with Jones's flagship, Gunboat no. 156, in some fifteen minutes of wild gunplay. The American resistance was too strong, and Lockyer and several supporting longboats were driven off.

A second wave of longboats attacked Jones's flagship, and this time British marines gained the deck. Jones fired at one of the attackers, but as that man fell, another rose behind him, firing at Jones. The bullet caught him in the left shoulder and Jones fell to the deck. As he was carried below, the attack was beaten off. But a third wave of longboats surrounded Gunboat 156 and quickly gained control. The British then turned to the remaining American gunboats and subdued them one by one. Forty-one Americans and ninety-four Britons were wounded or killed. Both commanders were wounded. Jones was taken aboard the British hospital ship *Gorgon* and then to Bermuda, a prisoner. The ball was never removed from his shoulder. Lockyer was posted for gallantry on March 25, 1815.⁵

It was a defeat for the Americans, for the British gained clear access to the Louisiana shore, but the British lost, too, for they were delayed at least two weeks in their landing, perhaps three. General Andrew Jackson had time to organize the defenses of the city, shift troops from Mobile to the New Orleans bayous, get support from Tennessee riflemen and the artillery of Jean Lafitte. The Tennessee riflemen had been laggard in reporting because the British had offered the independent backwoodsmen bribes if they organized a revolt against the regime in Washington. Jean Lafitte had been offered a captaincy in the British Navy if he would join forces in attacking the government that had put a price on his head. However, both the rifle-

men and the pirates had preferred the independence of America to the demands of a royal regime.⁶

The British reorganized and renewed their attack on New Orleans on January 8, 1815, when they met a crushing defeat at Chalmette. No matter that the peace treaty had been signed on December 25 at Ghent fourteen days earlier; nobody knew about it in America until February. Jones was released from Bermuda in April and returned to Louisiana where he recuperated from his wound on a plantation known as *Bienvenue*, whose owners were so kind to him that he later named portions of his estate in Fairfax County *Benvenue*. Jones now faced a court of inquiry concerning the loss of his five ships on Lake Borgne. The court found that his gallantry, and that of his crew, more than atoned for the loss of five gunboats. When he had recovered further, he was recommended for duty aboard the *U.S.S. Washington*, a seventy-four-gun ship of the line in the Mediterranean squadron, Isaac Chauncey, Captain. The Barbary pirates were still a big problem in the Mediterranean. Captain Chauncey's orders were to keep his ship in a high state of readiness. He was a rough and ready martinet, not unusual on a warship. His junior officers chafed under his demands. Jones found himself at the head of a list of forty-two subaltern officers petitioning the Senate to modify the use of courts-martial to discipline officers of the Navy, declaring that⁷

the defect, if any, is not in the law, but in the execution.

A group of six captains on the Mediterranean station opposed the petition, claiming that it tended

to excite disaffection and insubordination in the navy.

The petition of the junior officers got nowhere, but it must be concluded that if Thomas ap Catesby Jones learned to be a martinet, it was in the Mediterranean squadron. In 1818, Jones asked to be released from a three-year term after two years at sea. He returned to the U.S. to farm his land in Fairfax County, Virginia, land once belonging to his mother and near which his sister Elizabeth Lee (Betty) Jones was already living.

Thomas ap Catesby Jones was born on April 24, 1790, the second son of Major Catesby Jones and Lettice Corbin Turberville, in Northumberland County, Virginia.⁸ His father was a third generation descendant of Captain Roger Jones who came to Virginia with Lord Culpeper in 1680. When Captain Jones returned to England he left two sons in Virginia, Frederick and Thomas. Thomas married the daughter of Elizabeth Catesby, and began the custom of giving children the "Catesby" name, which has appeared in ev-

ery generation of the Jones family ever since, down to the present time. The name is so ancient in England that it appears in the Domesday Book.

Lettice Corbin Turberville, born in 1763, one of ten children of John and Martha Corbin Turberville, married Major Catesby Jones of Mount Zion, Northumberland County, 1778.⁹ She was the granddaughter of George Turberville of Hickory Hill, Westmoreland County, who had obtained a 3402-acre grant along the Potomac River and Scott's Run in 1724,¹⁰ and his third wife Martha Lee.¹¹ Turberville named the land *Woodberry Hill*. This property included the land on which the community of Lewinsville, and the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, would later be settled. George Turberville left *Woodberry* and *Hickory Hill* to his son John. John, in his 1799 will,¹² left *Woodberry* to his son Troilus Lewin Turberville who died in debt at age twenty-three.¹³ *Woodberry* was divided between Troilus' surviving sisters, Martha Corbin, the wife of Dr. Mottrom Ball, and Lettice Corbin, wife of Major Catesby Jones. Lettice's portion was called *Sharon*. In 1816, after Lettice's death, a suit to divide her estate, containing more than 1325 acres, was held in Fairfax County court.¹⁴ In 1830, Troilus' creditors demanded payment and brought suit.¹⁵ Both the Ball and Jones properties were sold at public auction October 18, 1830 and purchased by the heirs for the amount of the debt. Thomas ap Catesby Jones purchased 99 acres, part of lot #3 in the division of his mother's estate,¹⁶ 40 acres, also part of lot #3,¹⁷ and 76 acres, part of lot #4.¹⁸ He also purchased, with his brother Roger Jones, 150 acres, all of lot #5.¹⁹ He farmed 140 acres bordering Georgetown Pike close to where James Fenimore Cooper School is now located. In an 1854 essay rejuvenating his lands through the rotation of crops and the use of manure, lime, guano, ashes, and even some commercial fertilizers, Jones describes his land as largely unproductive at first:²⁰

This isolated patch drawn from a worn-out tobacco plantation of 3000 acres, was without improvements of any description; there had never been even a Negro Cabin on any part of it; it was not fenced in, nor was there a wheelbarrow load of manure about the premises, nor was there at that day, within my reach, any of the powerful, concentrated manures now so freely used ... No agriculturist, young or old, ever embarked on a more forlorn hope than I did when I undertook to renovate worn-out soil in Fairfax. 'Tis true, I had a small income of about \$700 per annum from another source, but what was that compared to my wants? I had houses of every description to build, labor to hire, feed and clothe, a farm to stock out and out, and my own personal and somewhat extravagant, wants, real and imaginary, to provide for. I had everything to buy and nothing to sell.

Jones found that his land had to be revitalized spiritually as well as physically. His sister Betty felt the need for a nearby church. Weekly services in the area had been provided by the Reverend William Maffitt, a Presbyterian minister who lived at *Salona*, a farm in present-day McLean, Virginia.²¹ Betty was acquainted with Mary Walker Carter, daughter of Reverend Maffitt's second wife Ann Beale Carter Carter, widow of Charles B. Carter. Mary was a descendant of the Lees of Virginia and of "King" Carter of Carter's Grove on the James River.²² It was probably Betty who introduced Mary to her brother Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones.

Without a church, the wedding of Jones to Mary Walker Carter took place at *Salona* July 1, 1823.²³ The minister who was to officiate, Reverend Thomas Balch of Washington, D. C., brother-in-law of the bride, failed to appear. While the groom harrumphed and the bride was reduced to nervous tears, Reverend Maffitt stepped forward and performed the ceremony him-



Mary Walker Carter Jones.
Oil painting, owned by the
estate of Martha Kreamer,
Black Mountain, North
Carolina. Artist unknown.

self. He never filed a minister's return. Unconcerned, the couple took up residence at *Sharon* while Lt. Jones commuted to the Washington Navy Yard where he was Superintendent of Ordnance.²⁴

Betty Jones had died six months before her brother's wedding. Her will, probated January 21, 1823, provided for the gift of four acres of her land

as a site for a church and church yard ... to be improved and dedicated to the uses and purposes of divine worship in such manner and subject to such rules and regulations as shall or may from time to time be prescribed by the Rev'd William Maffitt ...

or one of seven other ministers named in the will.²⁵ But Betty's legacy became void when the entire estate of her mother, Lettice Turberville Jones, remained entangled in litigation for more than fifteen years.²⁶ Reverend Maffitt, too, had died without ever having founded a church. Not until 1846, after Jones had returned from a second tour in the Pacific, did the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church become a reality.

Lieutenant Jones, who, as a boy in Richmond, Virginia, had avidly followed the explorations of Captain Cook, had his chance for South Sea adventure in 1826 when he was assigned to the Pacific Squadron. The Navy had become interested in the Pacific when a mutiny occurred aboard the whaling ship *Globe* in 1824. The *Globe* had been seized by three members of the crew after leaving the Hawaiian Islands. They had murdered the captain and the first, second, and third mates, intimidated the rest of the crew and sailed away. The New Bedford whaling investors were alarmed. They believed that the Hawaiian government, just being formed after centuries of primitive isolation, did not have sufficient control over deserters who had taken up residence in the Islands in increasing numbers, enjoying the easier life and the companionship of friendly Hawaiian women. The New Bedford ship owners petitioned the U.S. government to bring law and order to a land only partially understood by the world.²⁷

The Navy sent Lieutenant John ("Mad Jack") Percival in the sloop *Dolphin* to track down the *Globe*, but Percival simply sailed to Honolulu, antagonized the Hawaiian chiefs with his overbearing manner, and angered the American missionaries who had forbidden the young Hawaiian women to visit the ships. After his men rioted and attacked the missionary leader, Hiram Bingham, Percival left the Islands.

The Navy then ordered Captain Isaac Hull, commander of the Pacific Squadron, to go to the Hawaiian Islands on the flagship *United States* to

settle the dispute over deserters and to achieve some form of harmony and discipline for this important trading center. The mission was essentially diplomatic. Hull sent Jones, a lieutenant commanding, in the sloop of war *Peacock*.

Jones anchored in Honolulu harbor on October 11, 1826. He arrived six months after the departure of "Mad Jack" Percival. Jones not only had to gain the confidence of the Hawaiians who still remembered Percival, he had to deal with the growing influence of the British who treated the Hawaiians as subjects of Great Britain. The British wanted to expel the American missionaries, and showed no inclination to arrest British deserters. Their interests were represented by consul Richard Charlton, who repeatedly told the Hawaiians that the Americans were a colony of Great Britain and had no Navy.²⁸ Jones tried to keep the commercial interests and the British consul from evicting the missionaries from the Islands, denying that the British had the right to establish a protectorate there. He set up rules and payments for Hawaiian workers to earn money instead of allowing all payments to be made to the chiefs. He rounded up more than thirty deserters, signing them on the *Peacock* and to American whaling ships in the harbor. He entertained Hawaiian chiefs and foreign consular officials, spending much more than his Navy pay on good will.²⁹ Jones became known to the Hawaiians as the "kind-eyed chief."³⁰ He drew up a trade agreement with the chiefs which was vehemently opposed by Charlton who threatened to take possession of the Islands by military action.³¹ The agreement was, however, signed by Jones, the Hawaiian queen regent, the prime minister and principal chiefs.³² Jones had smoothed relations between the U.S. and Hawaii, challenged the authority of the British in the Islands, and accomplished his mission to round up deserters and arrange for the payment of debts supposedly owed by the Hawaiians to American merchants. He secured the promise of the Hawaiians to return all deserters to the ships or consuls of their own countries. Jones was evidently a tireless and effective diplomat, sensitive to the position of each side. His work was greatly appreciated by the Hawaiians and the missionaries, criticized by the traders and the British, but eventually accepted by all participants. As a token of their esteem the Hawaiians presented Jones with a feather cape which he brought to *Sharon* the following year.³³

In 1827, Jones returned to the U.S. During the next five years, he achieved the rank of captain, then the highest rank in the U.S. Navy. For a while he was Superintendent of Ordnance again, possibly the first commuter into the Washington Navy Yard from the Langley area, riding horse-

back down Georgetown Pike to Chain Bridge and then down the canal to the Navy Yard.

President Andrew Jackson, remembering Jones's heroic though unsuccessful defense of New Orleans that eventually spelled victory for Jackson, invited him to head the South Seas Exploring Expedition. This kept Jones in New York City for two years. During that time, he spent his personal fortune to support himself and fought hard for a squadron that he felt would best do exploring work in the South Sea Islands and on toward the South Pole. Unfortunately, he developed lung disease and had to spend some years recovering at *Sharon*³⁴ where, even in 1840, Jones was "residing ... in the most remote part of our county."³⁵

In February 1841, Jones was called to Richmond where, in a glittering ceremony on the steps of the Capitol, Governor Thomas W. Gilmer read a resolution passed by the legislature.³⁶

Resolved unanimously by the General Assembly that the Governor be and he is hereby requested to present to Thomas ap Catesby Jones, a citizen of Virginia, now a captain in the navy of the United States, a sword with suitable devices, in testimony of the high sense entertained by the Legislature of this Commonwealth, of his patriotic services during the late war with Great Britain, and more particularly for the gallantry and good conduct he displayed in the capture of the pirates of Barataria, on the 16th of September, 1814, and in the defense of the gunboats under his command near New Orleans, when attacked by an overwhelming force detached from Admiral Cochrane's fleet on the 14th of December, 1814.

Captain Jones spoke at some length in acknowledging the honor. His opening statements expressed gratitude and pride:

Governor—The highest reward the patriot warrior can desire is his country's approbation. If then, amid war's desolation, when duty prompts and hope animates, such demonstrations as we are now called to witness, are freely offered in the flush and pride of victory, how much more honorable, not to the recipient more than from the source from which they emanate, are such spontaneous tributes rendered, as it were, by another generation, freed from war's alarms, deliberately ratifying with filial pride, the judgment of fathers, formed in the days of national triumph.

To me, this presentation conveys a solace which none but those who have mingled in battle's unsuccessful strife can well appreciate. Unlike my compatriots in war ... my efforts were not crowned with suc-

cess. Nevertheless, I am not without reward. Independent of this inestimable symbol which it will be my constant care through life's remnant to preserve unsullied as I receive it, the presence of this assemblage and especially the approving smiles of so many of Virginia's fair daughters, would be recompense most ample for all that I have done or suffered in opposing the foe.

Before the year ended, Captain Jones was ordered to command the Pacific Squadron, with the frigate *United States* as his flagship. Because he would command a fleet of five ships, he became, by Navy custom, a commodore.

The *United States* had seen heavy service in the War of 1812, and in 1842 was in need of refurnishing. After a month of work in Norfolk to bring her into tiptop shape, Jones sailed the frigate to the Madeira Islands, then back across the South Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro (the usual route because of contrary winds north and south of the equator) where he prepared her for the trip around Cape Horn. While in harbor at Rio, some midshipmen rushed off to have a duel, a not unusual occurrence for teenagers long pent up on board ship, when the least remark could be interpreted as an insult and damaging to one's honor. Jones sent messengers to bring them back and required all his midshipmen to sign a "dueling pledge" — not to engage in duels while this three-year cruise should last, on pain of losing shore freedom when in port. Jones came from a dueling family³⁷ and wanted his men to protect the honor of the nation, but not engage in deadly brawls with shipmates over trifles. Most midshipmen signed readily enough, but seven refused. One, older than the others, protested to the Navy Secretary and asked to be relieved of his duty. The letter had to be forwarded through Commodore Jones, who added his own belief that the midshipman was using trifling excuses to get out of a long voyage into the Pacific. The *United States* had sailed around the Horn and into the Pacific before Secretary Abel Upshur replied to Jones and disapproved his denial of shore leave to enforce the pledge. But there were no more duels in the Pacific Squadron and in 1862 Congress outlawed dueling in the U.S. Navy.³⁸

In the Pacific, Jones sighted ships from Britain, France, Russia, and other colonizing nations. France had the strongest squadron in the Pacific, with eight ships mounting two hundred forty-three guns. Three of these appeared, and Jones had his crew stand to quarters for seven hours with guns ready and the ship cleared for action. As commander of the Pacific Squadron, Jones reported to Secretary Upshur the existence of the powerful French fleet.³⁹ The British and French were colonizing the Pacific, and

Jones felt the U.S. should defend its sailing and commercial interest against European colonizers. He had no instructions from the Navy Department since sailing from Norfolk, Virginia, on December 10, 1841. He found himself alone in the Pacific, with his squadron of five ships, facing a French fleet that had just captured the Marquesas Islands and a British squadron that seemed to have similar intentions toward California. Jones considered both fleets stronger than his own.⁴⁰

The era of colonization was in full swing, and before the year was out, France established protectorates over the Society Islands (Tahiti and the Marquesas). In the same year, Britain seized Hong Kong at the end of a three-year Opium War. South American nations along the Pacific coast were having civil problems following independence from Spain. The *United States* was using Callao, in Peru, as a home port, while the Pacific Squadron was under orders to carry out the mandate of the Monroe Doctrine which warned European nations to keep hands off the American continents—both North and South—and seemed to automatically place the U.S. squadron in opposition to the French and British fleets.

The most serious threat to the U.S. presence in the Pacific came from the British fleet; five ships led by the frigate *Dublin*, fifty guns, commanded by Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas. The *United States* and the *Dublin* happened to be in the port of Callao in September, 1842, when Admiral Thomas abruptly hoisted anchor and sailed out of port with secret orders.⁴¹ Now what?

The Louisiana Purchase had opened up the North American continent to the west coast. It was the “manifest destiny” of the U.S. to control California even though it then belonged to Mexico. But the Mexican control of this territory was weak, and American and Swiss adventurers, such as Thomas O. Larkin and John Sutter and others, quickly acquired land and influence. In the 1830’s and 1840’s, Mexico and Texas raided towns on both sides of the border. Mexico did not recognize Texas’ independence, while the U.S. and Great Britain did. Mexico considered Texas part of Mexico, and Texans as Mexican nationals. The Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations complained to the U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster that U.S. citizens were helping the “insurgent colonists” of Texas to rebel.⁴²

While General Santa Anna was threatening war with the U.S., Mexico was negotiating to cede California to Great Britain for seven million dollars. England would aid Mexico in the event of war.⁴³ Both British and Americans had settled in the Oregon territory and England was interested in colonizing upper California. Though American traders were established

in Monterey, the U.S. had no consul north of Mazatlan.⁴⁴ When Jones, anchored at Callao, heard that the British might gain possession of California, he prepared his squadron for sea duty. He considered the British threat a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. He felt there was no time to consult Washington; it could take six months to receive a reply. He did, however, consult with the U.S. consul in Lima and did write to Secretary Upshur of his intentions. Jones's captains agreed that it was the duty of the Pacific Squadron to proceed as though war was imminent and to do everything possible to frustrate any attempt by the Royal Navy to take over the coast of California.⁴⁵

Jones had just received letters, with clippings from a Boston newspaper, which announced British interest in California. The British would exchange debts owed to their bondholders by Mexico for title to the territory of California. The fighting along the Texas border with Mexico, coming so soon after the fall of the Alamo, along with letters from the Mexican Foreign Minister to Daniel Webster, led many diplomats to believe that war between the U.S. and Mexico was imminent, if not actually under way. Fears mounted that, if there was war with Mexico, Britain might take advantage of the unrest to seize California anyway, claiming right of discovery by Sir Francis Drake who had stopped there many years earlier.

Jones sailed from Callao with three ships, the frigate *United States*, the sloop *Cyane* with eighteen guns, and the smaller sloop *Dale*, sixteen guns. He sent the *Dale* to Panama, carrying a messenger to Washington to report to the Secretary of the Navy on the whereabouts of the squadron. When he sailed into Monterey Bay on October 19, 1842, Jones saw no British ships in the harbor, but sent a landing party on October 20th to take the fort so as to be in a better position should the British appear. The Mexicans, surprised and confused, armed with a few obsolete guns, surrendered Alta and Baja California, as well as Monterey. Jones's demands were translated for the Mexican townsmen by Thomas O. Larkin of New York, who had established residence in California and had married a señorita, which gave him the right to be a citizen and own land. Larkin became a successful speculator in California land, as well as the first consul for the U.S. in California.

When Jones went ashore on October 21st, he found newspapers with an August dateline which indicated that California would not be ceded to Great Britain and that no war with Mexico was imminent. No British ship appeared. Admiral Thomas had gone elsewhere. Jones, realizing he had acted precipitately, restored all of California to the Mexicans but remained

in port for another month. He wrote several voluminous letters to Washington, explaining his exploits in Monterey, expecting to be recalled because of his error. His crew felt deprived of glory. William H. Meyers, a gunner on the *Cyane*, wrote in his diary:⁴⁶

... the chieftain of Monterey is a humbugging old fudge.

However, the Mexicans were friendly and many of the seamen had a good time ashore.⁴⁷ They lay at anchor for thirty-three days. The crew attended dances, hunted, fished, and observed the scenery and customs of the local population. A seaman on the *United States* wrote in his journal:⁴⁸

... the inhabitants subsist entirely by hunting and fishing. The women are compelled to cultivate the soil and attend mostly to the wants of a family, while the husband lives at perfect ease in idleness and debauchery ... Murders are of common occurrence ... Marriages are uncommon. They are splendid horsemen ... very expert with the lasso.

The U.S. presence in Monterey opened the courts to foreign residents of California. Jones, in a letter to Secretary Upshur, stated:⁴⁹

Hitherto, our citizens, so barbarously treated in 1840, have not been allowed to prove their claims before any tribunal in the country.

Jones heard nothing from Washington. He sent the *United States* to Honolulu for supplies while, in late November, he boarded the *Cyane* and sailed to Los Angeles to explain the situation to the newly arrived governor of Alta California, General Miguel Micheltorena, a former favorite of Mexico's President Santa Anna who had sent him off to the wilderness of California when he tired of having him around the capital city. Micheltorena had heard of the attack by the Americans on Monterey and, on October 24th, alerted his military commanders to protect Los Angeles, as he expected an attack there too. On October 26th, he received word that Monterey had been restored to the Mexicans and attributed the retreat of U.S. forces to a fear of Mexican reprisal.

At Pueblo de Los Angeles, Jones discovered he was expected to sign a document abjectly apologizing for the Monterey affair. He was lavishly entertained, then presented with a bill for the replacement of Mexican military uniforms and band instruments worn out in their "defense" of Monterey. He was also to pay a \$15,000 indemnity. Jones considered the demands preposterous, but diplomatically explained that he could not accept responsibility for payment, and refused to sign the apology. He retired early and left the next morning to return to the *Cyane*.⁵⁰

The Mexican Minister in Washington pressed Daniel Webster for Jones's punishment. Jones was relieved of his command of the Pacific Squadron. However, by the time notification reached him he had once again defended American interests in Hawaii. The British Admiral Richard Thomas, hearing of the wild man who had sought to fight the British at Monterey, had written to London, asserting that he would need another ship if he were to defend the British position in the Pacific. He wrote:⁵¹

The experience I have been able to acquire during my visit to Central America and the coast of Mexico has considerably strengthened my conviction of the necessity of attending to the solicitations of the several consuls in these countries, and again urging that their Lordships will give my request for an increase to the squadron very favorable consideration.

British consul Richard Charlton, returning to England after many years in the Islands, stopped at Valparaiso to seek help from Admiral Thomas in pressing claims to some choice land he said the Hawaiian King Kamehameha II had given him some years earlier. The claim had not been honored by Kamehameha III, the young king who was only eleven years old when Jones had been negotiating in Honolulu in 1826, but who was now in his twenty's and was developing a strong hold on government. He had followed the usual custom which dictated that gifts of land in the Islands were returned at the death of the sovereign. Charlton's demands raised a diplomatic issue. The British sent a commissioner to try to settle the dispute. In the meantime, Lord George Paulet arrived aboard the British frigate *Carysfort*. He seized the Islands in February 1843, held them for five months, threatening to bombard Honolulu if his terms were not met.⁵² Jones, who had a special affection for Hawaii and the local administration, could not let this pass. He left Callao on June 21st in the *United States* and hastened to Hawaii at about the same time Admiral Thomas left Valparaiso and sailed to Honolulu.⁵³ Jones arrived at Hilo first and spent some eleven days reprovisioning his ship. He preached to the inhabitants about the sin of drunkenness, and prepared his ship for whatever might happen next.

His sermon was delivered to the congregation of the Reverend Titus Coan, American missionary on the Island of Hawaii. The band from the *United States* provided music for the hymns as well as a musical interlude or two for that Sunday service. According to Reverend Coan, Lord Paulet, during the months he controlled the Islands, had visited the Island of Hawaii.⁵⁴

He went directly to the prisons and in contempt of the remonstrances of judges, wardens, sheriffs, and others, turned loose a company of infamous men and women to spread their pollution through the community.

Reverend Coan's complaint was the same as those of the missionaries in Honolulu. They felt that Paulet's administration favored British businessmen and gamblers and the pleasure seekers of the shipping industry, contrary to Commodore Jones's attempt to keep the Islands safe for American businessmen and clear of deserters and mutineers from the Pacific shipping crews. In contrast to his description of Paulet, Coan wrote of Jones:⁵⁵

We had never before had the pleasure of meeting with Commodore Jones, but his name had become associated in our minds with urbanity, candor, truth, uprightness, and honor, and we were prepared to welcome him to our shores. We found him the same firm and fearless friend to truth and universal improvement that he was when he visited Oahu in the *Peacock* in the autumn of 1826.

Admiral Thomas arrived in Honolulu while Jones was at Hilo. Finding a general state of administrative turmoil, Thomas returned the Islands to Kamehameha III in a provisional retrocession. The British never admitted that American pressure had anything to do with Thomas's sudden reversal of Britain's intentions in Hawaii, but the facts are clear. During the five months of Paulet's rule in Hawaii, American opposition had become more and more apparent. Commodore Lawrence Kearny, commander of the U.S. East India Squadron, had protested Paulet's high-handed action when, arriving aboard his flagship, the frigate *Constellation*, thirty-six guns, Kearny was told by Paulet to stay out of Hawaiian affairs. However, Jones's attack on Monterey, though aborted, had sobered not only Admiral Thomas, but also the diplomats in London. Queen Victoria had dropped Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary and now supported Aberdeen, who made it clear that Britain had never intended to take affirmative action in Honolulu in February of 1843 and then rushed out in July to countermand the order.

The *Constellation* was still in port when Jones arrived in Honolulu August 4th. The town was in the midst of the Islanders' celebration of freedom from British rule. If Jones had intended to fight the British in Honolulu, as he had intended in Monterey, he was again preempted. He would now have difficulty justifying his rush to Hawaii in order to save it from the British who had returned the Islands voluntarily. On November 21, 1843, Jones wrote to the Secretary of the Navy.⁵⁶

The first and second day after my arrival in Oahu Roads were occupied in exchanging the usual visits of ceremony on shore and afloat. I found the inhabitants of the town under high excitement: all, except the English, rejoicing at the restoration, although that joy was far from being unalloyed. Many were the unredressed wrongs and grievances complained of by the Natives, Americans, French and all foreigners not owing allegiance to Great Britain. Our own Acting Consul, too, had his official complaints against Lord George Paulet ...

Not more as a matter of duty than from inclination and sound policy, my first efforts were directed to an inquiry into and an adjustment of the difference between our Acting Consul, Mr. W. Hooper and Lord George Paulet ... Suffice it to say that these two Gentlemen first met at my dinner table: this was followed by an invitation from Lord George Paulet to Mr. Hooper to meet Admiral Thomas, myself and others, at dinner on board H.B.M. Ship *Carysfort*, Lord George Paulet having previously waited on Mr. Hooper on shore, he accepted the invitation at my desire, and accompanied me to the *Carysfort* laying in the inner harbor of Oahu.

At the appointed hour as [we rowed to] the English ship, *her yards were manned*, and two salutes—the first of 13 [guns] the second of 9 — were fired, the American Ensign flying at her Fore. It is scarcely necessary to add that neither of the visitants on this occasion being entitled to the honor of *manned yards*, that part of the ceremony was construed, as it doubtless was intended, as a peace offering to all Americans residing in Oahu as well as to our country at large. Our countrymen on shore, however, though pleased with this public manifestation of respect to the American Flag, were not all of them fully appeased, nor will anything but time eradicate all the feelings of bitterness engendered by the transactions of Lord Paulet ...

At this point, in what seemed to be a time of triumph for the fifty-three-year-old Commodore Jones, he may have first heard the name, Herman Melville. Acting Consul W. Hooper had received a report from John Stetson, Vice Commercial Agent at Lahaina, Maui, that Melville and others were deserters from the whaling ship *Acushnet*.⁵⁷ Just the word “deserter” was enough to stand Jones’s hair on end. His first assignment to the Hawaiian Islands had been to clear out the deserters and troublemakers, and there can be little doubt that Jones, or his captain on the *United States*, James Armstrong, carried out some of his old orders when he returned to the Islands in 1843.

Herman Melville, a shy, pacifist landsman, twenty-four years old at the time, had gone to sea on a whaler perhaps to avoid an overwhelming

sense of malaise and frustration. His father's business failure and death in 1832 had left him unhappy and rebellious, not a suitable candidate for the rigors and discipline of sea life. The captain of the whaling ship he chose, the *Acushnet*, was so cruel to his men that Melville deserted at Nukuhiva in the Marquesas Islands, lived briefly among cannibals, escaped, found his way to Hawaii and employment in Honolulu with an English firm. On June 1, 1843, he signed a contract for a year. He fully approved of Paulet's action and had nothing but contempt for the missionaries.

Commodore Jones continued his efforts to smooth the ruffled feelings of missionaries and American businessmen. He reported to the Navy Department:⁵⁸

My exertions were unremitting in endeavors to restore harmony, with which view, I invited every respectable person in Oahu, without distinction of nation or sex, as well as the British Admiral and all his Officers, to meet the King at lunch, on the 12th of August; of course, the Officers of our own three ships [*United States*, *Constellation* and *Cyane*] were [invited], while preparations were made to entertain two hundred persons. The affair went very well; the King left (as he had been received) under a salute of 21 guns, with yards manned on board all the men of war ...

One of the persons not invited to meet the king was Herman Melville. Yet Melville did board the *United States*, on August 17th, when he suddenly resumed his sea career. He never said why his plans were changed. Either Jones ordered him picked up after reading Stetson's report, or, possibly, a Hawaiian had turned in his name in accordance with the terms of the treaty of friendship Jones concluded with the Hawaiians in 1826. Whatever the reason, it would not have made either man very attractive in the eyes of the other.

Nor did the events of the next few years make Jones a more genial officer. He had been embarrassed by the Monterey incident, and his rush to Hawaii did not give him an opportunity to add a victory to the error. Even though, in retrospect, it can be argued that the attack on Monterey did much to change British intentions toward Hawaii, it did not seem so to many Americans and the British never admitted that they had been outmaneuvered by the American commodore.

Conferring with Commodore Kearny before leaving Honolulu, Jones agreed to sail to Tahiti and the Marquesas to observe the activities of the French fleet there, before returning to Callao, while Kearny was to sail to Monterey to learn the status of Mexican-American relations before meeting Jones at Callao. Jones, with seaman Melville among the five hundred

crewmen who sailed the *United States* through the waters of the Pacific, arrived at the Marquesas after forty-seven days at sea. There he found a letter from Commodore Alexander J. Dallas, the first official indication that Jones had received concerning any of his actions in the Pacific.

Commodore Dallas had arrived at Callao soon after Jones had left for Hawaii. He became angry to discover that Jones had gone off into the deep Pacific in search of — who knows what? He wrote the letter which caught up with Jones in the Marquesas, telling him to proceed to Callao where he was to turn over the *United States* to the new commander of the Pacific Squadron. Then Dallas sailed to Hawaii and again arrived after Jones had left. Then on to Tahiti, missing Jones on every occasion. Meanwhile Jones, at Tahiti and Valparaiso, received a total of four letters from Dallas, demanding that he repair immediately to Callao to receive his orders. Jones met Kearny at Valparaiso, and sailed with him on the *Constellation* for home. Dallas, apoplectic, wrote to the Secretary of the Navy, demanding that Jones be court-martialed.⁵⁹

When Jones returned to the U.S. in 1844, he had no opportunity to explain his exploits in Hawaii, for the nation was still concerned about his “capture” of Monterey. Relations with Mexico were not good, largely because of the conflict over the status of Texas. Jones was told to say nothing about his trip to the Pacific. That left the illusion among historians that Jones had done nothing to pull Hawaii away from the British grip in 1843, that his trip was simply an attempt to hang on to his job as commander of the Pacific Squadron a little longer, or was possibly motivated by an innate hatred of the British. Actually, Jones had been writing letters to the Secretary of the Navy Upshur for two years, giving detailed accounts of his movements around Cape Horn, to Monterey and then to Honolulu and Tahiti. The full story of the cruise of the *United States* is written in Jones's letters to Upshur. But while Jones was in the Pacific, Upshur had been shifted to the State Department and Thomas Gilmer had replaced him at Navy. Both were killed by the explosion of a huge gun on the deck of the experimental Navy ship *Princeton* on February 28, 1844.

John Y. Mason was Secretary of the Navy when Jones reported to the Department in May, 1844. Jones was privately commended for his actions at Monterey. In 1845 a new Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft, appointed Jones to work on a commission to establish the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. And in 1846 Jones was working on the founding of the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, on land donated by the Ball family, about two miles from his residence on Georgetown Pike.

The seaman in the maintop of the *United States*, on its voyage from Callao to the east coast of the U.S., was under no orders to remain silent. When he returned to the U.S., Melville wrote at some length about his visit with the cannibals, his escape to other islands, and other stories about life among the South Sea Islanders. In his writings he brushed off the efforts of the American missionaries and assumed a completely British attitude toward Captain Paulet's seizure of Hawaii. In *Typee*, published in 1846, two years after his return aboard the *United States*, Melville wrote:⁶⁰

No transaction has ever been more grossly misrepresented than the events which occurred up to the arrival of Lord George Paulet at Oahu. During a residence of four months at Honolulu, the metropolis of the group, the author was in the confidence of an Englishman who was much employed by his lordship [Paulet] ... He deems it, therefore, a mere act of justice towards a gallant officer briefly to state the leading circumstances connected with the event in question.

It is needless to rehearse all the abuse that for some time previous to spring of 1843 had been heaped upon the British residents especially upon Captain Charlton, Her Britannic Majesty's consul general, by the native authorities of the Sandwich Islands. High in the favour of the imbecile king at this time was one Dr. Judd, a sanctimonious apothecary-adventurer, who, with other kindred and influential spirits, were animated by an inveterate dislike to England. The ascendancy of a junto of ignorant and designing Methodist elders in the councils of a half-civilized king, ruling with absolute sway over a nation just poised between barbarism and civilization ...

Melville's *White Jacket*, published in 1850, tells about life aboard a frigate of the U.S. Navy. It describes the routines of sailing and the personnel that keep the ship going. Some characters are fictional; some events are real and some invented by Melville. Commodore Jones was not aboard the *United States* at the time Melville describes—the journey from Callao harbor around Cape Horn to its final berth at Norfolk. But Melville needed a commodore to complete his story about life on a flagship of the Pacific Squadron, and his description is of Jones:⁶¹

Our commodore was a gallant old man, who had seen service in his time. When a lieutenant, he served in the late war with England, and in the gunboat actions on the Lakes near New Orleans, just previous to the grand land engagements, received a musket-ball in the shoulder, which, with the two balls in his eyes, he carries with him to this day.

Often when I looked at the venerable old warrior, doubled up from the effect of his wound, I thought what curious as well as painful sensation it must be to have one's shoulder a lead mine.

On account of this wound in his shoulder, our commodore had a body-servant's pay allowed him, in addition to his regular salary. I cannot say a great deal, personally, of the commodore: he never sought my company at all; never extended any gentlemanly courtesies.

But though I cannot say much of him personally, I can mention something of him in his general character, as a flag-officer. In the first place, then, I have serious doubts, whether, for the most part, he was not dumb, for, in my hearing, he seldom or never uttered a word. And not only did he seem dumb himself, but his presence possessed the strange power of making other people dumb for the time. His appearance on the quarterdeck seemed to give every officer the lockjaw.

Another phenomenon about him was the strange manner in which everyone shunned him. At the first sign of those epaulets of his on the weather side of the poop, the officers there congregated invariably shrunk over to leeward, and left him alone. Perhaps he had an evil eye; maybe he was the Wandering Jew afloat. The real reason probably was, that, like all high functionaries, he deemed it indispensable religiously to sustain his dignity; one of the most troublesome things in the world, and one calling for the greatest self-denial ...

This reference to Jones's religious fervor was not off the mark. Jones had demonstrated religious leadership at an early age. In 1810, in command of a gunboat in the Gulf of Mexico, he was responsible for giving services every Sunday morning. At one time, when his crew was suffering from an outbreak of yellow fever, Jones landed his ship on the Gulf shore, tended to the sick himself, cooked the meals, read the burial service over the graves of those who succumbed to the fever, and generally served as pastor, doctor, and captain of his crew even though he was only twenty years old, and a passed midshipman.⁶² Jones had championed the missionaries in Hawaii, had preached a sermon at Hilo while the band of his ship played hymns for the service. While the *United States* was Jones's flagship, the Sunday service was scrupulously observed and the frigate carried a chaplain who was responsible for services at sea. Melville, having served aboard the *United States* as a top foremast man, described Sunday services in *White Jacket*. He wrote that their clergyman was a slender young man who had "drunk at the mystic fountains of Plato,"⁶³ preaching to the offi-

cers and men aboard the *United States* while at sea, with the salt air blowing across the main deck and snapping the sails:

Fancy now, this transcendental divine standing behind a gun-carriage on the main-deck and addressing 500 salt-sea sinners upon the psychological phenomena of the soul, and the ontological necessity of every sailor's saving it at all hazards ... The officers always sat in a circle around the chaplain, and with a businesslike air steadily preserved the utmost propriety. In particular, our old Commodore himself made a point of looking intensely edified; and not a sailor aboard but believed that the Commodore, being the greatest man present, must alone comprehend the mystic sentences that fell from our parson's lips.

There is more, much of it not flattering to the commodore. Melville was appalled by the punishment of flogging, then prevalent in the British and American Navies, in fact in all navies. A holdover from the days when slaves manned the oars of naval vessels, and continued when crews were conscripted from the grog shops and byways of port cities, flogging was deemed necessary by most commanders to keep a crew responsive. Commanders were aware of how easily a ship could be lost at the hands of a few determined mutineers when the objective of the mutiny is kept hidden and the rest of the crew is caught by surprise. Also, the frigates were not responsive to wind and wave without great effort on the part of the crews. Immediate obedience to commands was essential. The captain of the ship maintained order by a stiff formality and an overwhelming dignity, and received the support of his officers. Melville, a comparative neophyte at sea, caring nothing about a commander's problems and concerned only with the rights of ordinary seamen, launched a devastating attack against the authority of the commander and the Navy's Articles of War, and the flogging of seamen. His writings aroused sympathy for the swabs who kept the great ships going. Since it was a time of peace for the U.S., there was no allowance for the demands of patriotism. But it fitted in nicely with the mood of the day—develop steam power to replace the manpower and sails of the Navy.

It is a fact that the Old Navy was dying for just that reason, and Jones would have to bear the burden of its sins until the transition could be made after the Civil War.

For Jones, the year 1846 brought new domestic, as well as professional, responsibilities. As Inspector of Ordnance he was again commuting to the Navy Yard. At home at *Sharon*, he at last founded the Lewinsville Presby-

terian Church. He was the first trustee, undoubtedly seconded by his wife Mary, the stepdaughter of the Reverend William Maffitt whose dream they were fulfilling.

Land for the church was donated by Martha Corbin Turberville Ball, an Episcopalian, and her four children.⁶⁴ She was a sister of Lettice and an aunt of the commodore. The name “Lewinsville” probably represented the two families backing the project. “Lewin” was the name of several members of the Ball family, and “ville” was part of the Turberville name. The Lewinsville congregation formed a church on October 17, 1846, and applied to the Winchester Presbytery for a pastor.⁶⁵ The Presbytery sent the Reverend Levi H. Christian, who had just been ordained on October 2nd and who is listed in the Presbytery records as a missionary to Fairfax County. The church building, a white frame structure of colonial style, with a pot-belly stove in one corner and a slave gallery over the vestibule, was built at a cost of \$650 on a two-acre lot adjoining Barrett’s Crossroads and dedicated on January 3, 1847. Mason Shipman plowed the ground for a cemetery, receiving as compensation one burial plot. First elders were Amzi Coe and Benajah Gilbert. The congregation numbered perhaps seventeen and offered its minister \$500 a year. As remembered by Jones’s granddaughter Ida Petigru Beall many years later, the members included: Commodore and Mrs. Jones and their four children (Mary E. L., Martha C., Mark C., and M. Patterson), Martha Corbin Turberville Ball, Miss Lucy Ball, Amzi Coe, Archibald Sherwood, Mr. and Mrs. Benajah Gilbert, Mr. and Mrs. Osborn, and Mr. and Mrs. Ives. There were people in the slave gallery, too. Griffin Dobson, a servant of the commodore’s who had accompanied him on two trips at sea was there, as was Belinda Brown, a servant of the Jones and Ball families who was close enough to them to be buried in the church cemetery after the Civil War.

May of 1847 brought war with Mexico, four years after Jones’s capture of Monterey. In June, Jones presided over a board to examine midshipmen, and in November the Navy detached him as Inspector of Ordnance and sent him west to command the Pacific Squadron for the second time, with the U.S.S. *Ohio*, seventy-four guns, as his flagship. Evidently, he was to conclude the Navy’s work on the Pacific coast quickly and then cross the ocean “to open commercial intercourse between the United States and Japan.”⁶⁶ It looked like more adventure, but it turned out to be the most difficult assignment of his career.

Jones reached the Pacific coast at Mazatlan when negotiations for the end of the war with Mexico, the Peace of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, were nearly

completed. Officials of Baja California who had been friendly to the U.S. needed to escape the wrath of demobilized Mexican soldiers who had become guerillas, robbing and looting everyone favorable to the Americans. Jones rescued some three hundred alcaldes and their families (town officials) who had supported the American cause during the war with Mexico and were now in grave danger from guerillas. He paid them for loss of their homes by tapping the military contribution fund, money available to Jones in 1842 when he seized Monterey, and later from customs duties collected by U.S. Navy officers in control of Mexican ports during the war. The refugees sailed with Jones until the *Ohio* reached Monterey.

California wanted to become a free state as soon as possible. But Congress preferred to dally over the question of parity of slave and free states. Delay and inaction were blamed on the commanders on the scene. Navy seamen, now that peace had arrived, no longer wanted to stay aboard ship. Gold had just been discovered on the American River. The prospect of incredible wealth dangled before the eyes of the fighting men of the Navy, and the Pacific Squadron boiled with discontented tars. Desertions were rampant. When the *Ohio* reached La Paz, one "John Smith" tried to run away, and, when captured, declared, "It's no use to take me, for I will desert again."⁶⁷

While gold fever hit its highest pitch among crewmen, even under-officers tried to go prospecting before returning to their homes in the east. Jones insisted that Navy rules be followed. If the crew signed up on the east coast, they must be returned to a home port before being discharged. It was a rule for the protection of sailors against unscrupulous captains and could not be broken. Jones now had to work his way up the Baja California coast with a rebellious crew, no orders from Washington, no telephone, no telegraph, no radio. He tried to keep control by giving the crew stern lectures on patriotism and the faithfulness of George Washington, and sailed north toward Monterey in the hope of providing some stability for the newly acquired territory of California.⁶⁸ But the discontent continued. At Monterey, courts-martial were busy passing judgment on deserters, and many sailors felt deprived of their freedom as Jones severely restricted shore leave.

In Monterey, Jones tried to make a trip to the gold fields to meet the acting governor of California, and to take some money from his officers to buy gold at the mines. But he was prevented by a flagrant case of desertion. He struggled to hold his crew together and to help California organize as a state. Although he never held the title, he was acting military governor from time to time as that position shifted between various Army generals

who held it for brief periods. He sounded the Upper Bay of San Francisco and recommended Benicia as a site for the naval repair base (now Mare Island). He met a visiting congressman and showed him around the new state. Unfortunately, the congressman became ill with fever, cut short his visit, and later was appointed a collector of customs, but never had a kind word to say about the commodore.⁶⁹

The economy of California suffered from a lack of coinage and currency. A pinch of gold dust paid for whiskey but foods were imported and customs duties had to be paid in coin. While food was scarce, gold dust was everywhere. Speculators dealt in land, but nobody planted a garden. In a state of near anarchy, the Californians desperately needed a medium of exchange. Merchants wanted coins or specie, something backed by the U.S. government. Jones, in an attempt to do something to stabilize the situation, and without guidance from Washington, used the remainder of the military contribution fund to provide currency for California. He bought gold dust at \$12 an ounce and sold it on the New York market at \$18.50 an ounce, using the proceeds to filter new money into the California economy. In the process, he withheld some of the profits for himself as expenses in effecting the transfer.

A case of attempted murder in the Pacific Squadron, while anchored in San Francisco Bay, brought the discipline issue to a head. Five sailors from the *Ewing*, commanded by passed midshipman Gibson, mutinied at the entrance to the Sacramento River, tossed Gibson overboard into the swirling currents, holding him under the water with oars until he was deemed drowned, then rowed off into the night. Passersby on shore heard the struggle, rowed out and retrieved what they thought was a body. Gibson was revived by a local physician, and identified the mutineers. A rigorous search located them in the embryo town called "New York of the Pacific."⁷⁰ Jones hired lawyers at his own expense to defend the mutineers. In the succeeding court-martial they were all convicted without recommendation of mercy, except from Gibson, who requested pardon for the young man who pulled the bow oar of the launch. The sentence of hanging was carried out for the two ringleaders, the Black brothers, but was reduced for the other three to one hundred lashes and a dishonorable discharge.

Perhaps because of his unauthorized use of the military contribution fund, or because of his stern disciplinary measures, or the decisions he had to make in the absence of orders from Washington, Jones was recalled. He was told to return to Washington "by the shortest route and without unnecessary delay."⁷¹ He returned to a hostile Washington and to a nation that

was anguishing over the slavery issue and, closely allied, the treatment of sailors aboard its ships at sea.

Richard Henry Dana had published *Two Years Before The Mast* in 1840, a powerful statement against flogging aboard a whaler. Now, in 1850, Herman Melville, returned from a voyage around Cape Horn in the *United States*, published *White Jacket*, or *The World in a Man-of-War*, a potboiler, by his own admission, to raise money. The book dealt with life on the frigate *Neversink*, with "the Commodore" as one of the principal characters.⁷² In the book, Melville comes down hard on flogging as a means of securing instant obedience to commands. He claims it is illegal and devotes more than three chapters to proving his point. He also demands that the Articles of War be revised, and accuses "the Commodore" of pomposity. Reviewers generally hailed the book as a great story of life at sea, revealing the abuses of the Navy in detail. But there was at least one exception. The review in the *Boston Post* for April 10, 1850, reported by Willard Thorp in the "historical note" accompanying the Northwestern-Newbury edition of *White Jacket*, is sharply critical. Mr. Thorp writes:⁷³

The long "Literary Notice" of *White Jacket* in the *Boston Post* for April 10, 1850 is important because it takes issue with Melville's attacks on naval abuses, a feature of the book which had been almost invariably praised. The reviewer observes that all the notices of the work he has seen 'regard it in a literary light only.' It does indeed contain many passages of excellent writing, but on the whole, *White Jacket* assumes to be a didactic, rather than an 'ornamental' book and must be judged accordingly. Melville abuses the navy so very heartily as to make one doubt 'the soundness and knowledge of such a wholesale reformer, such a venomous upholder of abstract right, against that singular mixture of right and wrong which always has prevailed, and ever must prevail, to some extent, in the administration of terrestrial affairs, whether of religion or government, of ships or armies.' Because a man can produce a spirited and beautiful romance like *Typee* or an autobiography like *Redburn*, "running over with a Defoe naturalness and verisimilitude," it does not follow that he is competent to discuss the fitness or unfitness of the Articles of War, the propriety or impropriety of flogging in the Navy, or the whole system of government and ceremonials of our "National Marine." Discussion of these great practical subjects requires practical men—men of character, wisdom, and experience—not men of theories, fancies and enthusiasm. Let the cobbler stick to his last. Stern as this long review is, it is not a mere personal attack. Mr. Melville has a right to his opinions. The trouble is that his opinions are wrong.

Although professional Navy men protested against the book, it was on the desk of every senator when the U.S. Congress was considering legislation to outlaw flogging in the Navy.

The identity of Commodore Jones was attached to the novel from the beginning. The reviewer in the New Bedford *Mercury* put it most directly when he stated that the book told of Melville's "service on board the frigate *United States*, returning as the flag ship of the Pacific squadron from Callao to Norfolk."⁷⁴ Yet Melville refused to admit to the identity of his characters. He explained this in a letter to Richard Henry Dana, Jr. in 1850:⁷⁵

I am very loath to do so, because I have never indulged in any ill-will or disrespect for them personally, and shrink from anything that approaches too personal identification of them with characters that were only intended to furnish samples of a tribe—characters, also, which possess some not wholly complimentary traits.

Melville was already at work on *Moby Dick*. In the same letter to Dana, he wrote:

About the whaling voyage—I am half way in the work ... It will be a strange sort of book, tho', I fear; blubber is blubber, you know, tho' you may get oil out of it, the poetry runs as hard as sap from a frozen maple tree—& to cook the thing up, one must needs throw in a little fancy—

In July, 1850, President Zachary Taylor died and was succeeded by Vice-President Millard Fillmore, and once again the Secretary of the Navy was changed. William A. Graham, former senator and governor of North Carolina, became Secretary with instructions to straighten out the Navy.

In September, Congress made flogging illegal in the U.S. Navy and Merchant Marine. And in December, Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones, at age sixty, was brought before a court-martial at the Washington Navy Yard, his former work station, only a few miles from *Sharon*.

At the trial, Jones's handling of the military contribution fund was interpreted as fraud, his discipline considered oppression. His efforts to maintain order and hold down inflation in the chaos of California were misinterpreted, and much time was spent over the question of attempted murder by the Black brothers. In a vehement indictment, Secretary Graham accused Jones of convening⁷⁶

divers general courts-martial for the trial of divers offences alleged to have been committed by divers officers and seamen of the navy of the United States: and oppressively, and without warrant or authority of

law, ordered and caused the sentences of said courts to be executed and by color of said usurped power and unlawful proceedings inflicted divers cruel punishments upon such officers and seamen, and particularly on the 23rd day of the said month of October, 1849, in the bay of San Francisco, in the waters of the United States, inflicted, and caused to be inflicted, the punishment of death upon two men, named John Black and Peter Black ... by a court martial ... but not having been confirmed by the President of the United States.

This charge, later thrown out, did not take into account the fact that California was a land in political limbo at the time of Jones's activities there. The need for presidential authority in capital cases did not become necessary until California became a state on September 9, 1850. In California, Jones was a pioneer, trying to keep order under conditions of turmoil and rebellion, where the rules were ambiguous and difficult to apply. He firmly believed the court-martial would clear him of charges of mistreating the sailors and misappropriating funds. But the Navy, stinging from criticism of its handling of a much-publicized mutiny aboard the U.S.S. *Somers*, and influenced by the writings of Herman Melville, found Jones guilty of two of the five charges (not guilty of fraud, moderately guilty of oppression). He was suspended from service for five years and his pay stopped for half the term, because, the Judge Advocate stated in addenda to the record:

[of] the profits made by him from the improper and unauthorized use of the public money.

Jones had no opportunity to respond, although he did argue at other times that the Navy owed him much more money than he had derived from his handling of the gold funds, having used his own funds on numerous official occasions in Hawaii and California, for which he was never reimbursed. But the damage to his career was permanent. The old commodore would remain in dry-dock for the rest of his life.⁷⁷

Secretary of the Navy Will Graham confirmed the sentence within the month:

I have examined the record ... and approve the action of the Court in quashing the 3rd specification of the 5th charge. I am of the opinion that the findings of the court on the other charges and specifications are in accordance with the evidence ...

On February 21, 1853, then Navy Secretary Kennedy wrote a lengthy letter to President Fillmore,⁷⁸ pleading the case of the old commodore, now

in retirement across the Potomac. Kennedy, with more understanding than most commentators of the day, pointed out that, while Jones did employ public money for his own profit,

... he acted in the matter under a belief that he was not violating any public duty, nor rule of the service, and that he was partly induced to engage in this transaction from a belief that he was contributing to the commercial relief and advantage of the people of California.

Looking to the high character Commodore Jones sustained previous to these transactions, through the long period of his attachment to the navy, without any imputation against his honor or integrity or his deportment as an officer, and his valuable services to the country in time past, and also to the high estimation in which he has ever been held as a brave and meritorious officer, and being persuaded that in those events which led to his trial by a court martial, he was rather influenced by mistaken views of his obligation and duty than by any corrupt design .. I am induced to look upon his offence with much of that forbearance due to human weakness, and to acknowledge in the circumstance attending it, much to extenuate its character ... I cannot but feel an earnest sympathy for the misfortunes of this gallant officer.

Kennedy received a reply from Fillmore the next day and wrote to Jones to say that the remainder of his sentence had been remitted and that he should now consider himself "as awaiting orders."

While Jones renewed efforts to have the Navy reverse the sentence of the court-martial, the publications of Herman Melville continued to call attention to the problems of the great sailing ships of a period that was ending. The inefficiency of an economic system that built its profits on cheap and abused labor was beginning to be sensed in the maritime industry. Arguments in the Senate over flogging illustrated the ambivalence among U.S. lawmakers about providing adequate pay for hard work. Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi argued on the Senate floor in 1850 that abolishing flogging in the Navy was no solution to the problems of disobedience and desertion,⁷⁹ declaring that punishment itself was not sufficient aboard a ship to achieve absolute compliance. The Navy, he believed, must go to the other extreme:

You must go to the system of rewards, the manner by which it can be done is to increase the pay of the sailor of the navy of the United States to something materially over the pay he could get upon any marine vessel, so as to make it a punishment, and a severe punishment, to dismiss him from the navy.

Davis, like many others of his time, knew what needed to be done in the pre-Civil War society of 1850, but couldn't accomplish a change. Nor could he apply his ideas to the increasing problem of rebellious and runaway slaves.

In 1851, Herman Melville published *Moby Dick*.⁸⁰ The novel depicts a ferocious commander, Captain Ahab (named for a hated king of Israel), obsessed by revenge for the loss of a leg he suffered in an encounter with a white whale. Correspondingly, Commodore Jones was a Calvinistic, dour disciplinarian, wounded in battle and zealous in his efforts to frustrate British ambitions in the Pacific. After the first shock of sighting Ahab, Ishmael, the narrator, writes:⁸¹

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of his overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw.

'Aye, he was dismasted off Japan,' said the old Gay-Head Indian once, 'but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of 'em.'

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained. Upon each side of the Pequod's deck, and pretty close to the mizzen shrouds, there was an augerhole, bored about half an inch or so, into the plank. His bone leg steadied in the hole, one arm elevated, and holding by a shroud, Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsurrendable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of the glance. Not a word he spoke, nor did his officers say ought to him, though by all their minutest gestures and expression, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

Though Melville, a nonconformist, constantly resisting authority, showed more sympathy for the whale Moby Dick than for the maimed, troubled Captain Ahab, he was a gentle person, uneasy in the harshness of sea life. He could sense, in spite of his rhetoric, the hurt beyond the wound itself of the two men whose physical suffering was transcended by the fear that a cripple can no longer control the crew; the certainty that the king, the

commander, the leader, must be the strongest, unaffected by the weakness around him. Even more so on a ship at sea, with no rescue possible for any lapse of strength.

After the court-martial, Jones spent his time at *Sharon* tending to his agriculture and the fledgling congregation of the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church. His experiments with natural fertilizers had borne fruit and his acreage was regarded as some of the best in Fairfax County. So lovely was the farm cultivated by Jones and his wife Mary that John Quincy Adams, in the summer of 1842, noted in his diary that he had been invited to *Sharon* to attend some festivities and remarked:⁸²

Commodore Jones's seat is a paradise in the wild under his cultivation. The house is surrounded by trees which are almost alive with the music of mocking birds and robins ...

Jones experimented with the new commercial fertilizers, contrasting their effect on the crops with the Peruvian guano that he had used for some years on his land. His letter to the Chappell Fertilizer Company was used in their ad in the *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser* for September 28, 1852. He won a prize from the *American Farmer*, published in Baltimore, for his essay on "The Renovation of Worn-Out Lands."⁸³ In his article, he tells of the use of gypsum, manures, lime, fertilizer, ashes and other products to improve Virginia soil that had been depleted of nutrients by generations of growing corn and tobacco without relief. The *Warrenton Flag* printed in its review:⁸⁴

It is one of the most interesting essays on Agriculture we have ever read, and contains results which read to us marvelous, and but for the plausibility given by the figures we would regard as fabulous. The idea of producing \$1,113.37 from ten acres of Fairfax land, looks to us so near to impossible that we would not have credited it, but for the items afforded by the Essay.

His work had, about ten years earlier, brought attention to Virginia farming and created an influx of northern farmers into Fairfax County to take advantage of cheaper land in the south. In 1854, soon after the publication of his prize essay, he was elected president of the Fairfax County Agricultural Society.⁸⁵

The Lewinsville congregation was busy building its church, a white frame structure with a parsonage, a barn, and a schoolhouse. Not much is known about the schoolhouse, except that it survived the Civil War and was eventually destroyed by fire. Money was hard to find in a farming

community, and the congregation evidently had to borrow heavily to get the buildings constructed. The codicil to Jones's will, dated August 5, 1857, states:⁸⁶

Codicil: My will and desire is that if a debt due by note amounting to about three hundred dollars, which note is signed by Francis Crocker, John Gilbert and myself, committee for building a Parsonage near the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church in this county and made payable to _____ Osborne on order shall remain due and unpaid, or any part thereof at the time of my death, my executors herein before named are authorized and required to discharge the sum in full out of any assets in their hands after my just and lawful debts are paid or satisfactorily disposed of.

The church maintained itself by calling on the labor of the members, and there were probably few expenses that could not be met by donations of time and materials. A Sunday school was established at the very beginning, and the commodore was the first Sunday school superintendent. With a new church building, the congregation settled down to provide a house of worship for a broad area of farm land that included the present communities of McLean, Langley, Falls Church, Vienna, and west as far as Reston. In 1846, the wagons must have traveled for up to an hour to reach the house of worship at the intersection of Great Falls Street and Chain Bridge Road.

The Reverend Mr. Christian left Lewinsville in 1848 and was replaced by F. N. Whaley, a licentiate under the care of the Winchester Presbytery, who was to give half his time to Lewinsville and half to the rest of Fairfax County. When the Reverend B. F. Bittinger was installed as pastor in 1852, the congregation had grown to sixty-nine.⁸⁷ They welcomed the new pastor with a friendship quilt which contained the names of the members of the congregation, including an inscription that may have indicated their intention in organizing the church:

And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,
And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Dan XII 3.

The names on the quilt reveal much history in a subtle way. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel H. Barrett, after whom Barrett's Crossroads was named, were still members although they had moved to Falls Church. The Crossroads, originally known as Turberville,⁸⁸ was called Lewinsville by 1860.⁸⁹ Mary W. Jones had a place of her own on the quilt to honor her contribution to the life of the church. Martha C. Turberville Ball is listed, she having do-

nated the land on which the church was built. Place names, representing events in the life of the commodore also appear on the quilt: *Lake Borgne*, where Mr. and Mrs. Perkins lived as tenants, and *Benvenue*, the home of Mrs. M. H. Dulany, and *Sharon*.

Reverend Bittinger resigned in January 1857 and was replaced six months later by the Reverend C. B. McKee who was living in Baltimore and without a pastorate at the time. He was invited by the trustees to fill the pulpit for several Sundays. On Saturday, June 13th, Reverend McKee set out for Lewinsville. He recorded the event in his diary:⁹⁰

... at 5 o'clock, Commodore Jones' servant, Nat, brought a carriage for me to take me to his house. The day being warm, we were full two hours going, & arrived there about dark. The Commodore had been ill, was riding about the place to prepare to go to church tomorrow.

On Sunday, June 14th, Reverend McKee preached for the first time at Lewinsville and Falls Church. His diary for that day states:

At Com. Jones. Preached in the a.m. in the church from Jno.1:29 to 70 souls, black & white—11 were black. Com. Jones was not able to go out. Mr. Sherwood took me to his house, where I dined—& preached in the Falls Church* from 1 Cor. 3:22,23 to about as many as in the a.m. I received \$3.25. Mr. Sherwood carried me to within sight of Georgetown—I then walked to, & over the aqueduct** paying 3 cents toal, & got home at dusk.

Reverend McKee in his diary makes many references to the Jones family, showing the active participation of the commodore's wife in church affairs. His entry for Sunday, August 9th, reads:

Fairfax County at Com. Jones. Rode with Mrs. Jones to church. Didn't commence to preach till 12. Very few out.

And on October 9th:

I heard today that Com. Jones is quite unwell. I purpose to visit him to-morrow a.m.

But the next day the parson found Jones up and walking about his estate. Five days later, however, after Lieutenant Meriwether Patterson Jones and his sister Martha, two of the commodore's four children, called on the

* Groot Hall

** The bridge that preceded Key Bridge

minister, he wrote:

The Com. is quite feeble—he is becoming quite infirm.

And on October 21st:

Through the kindness of Com. Jones we had corned beef, cabbage & potatoes for dinner. Our usual dinner is potatoes and salt.

And on November 13th:

Com. Jones sent us two small one-horse loads of wood.

None of the persons who criticized Jones realized that his decisions in the Pacific could have been best understood if they had ever visited the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church. In organizing the church, Jones had been inspired by the need, expressed by his sister Betty and Reverend Maffitt, for a community built on religious principles, the same principles that guided his ships through the contested waters of the Pacific and converted a dispirited and barren wilderness into a garden that captivated John Quincy Adams. In Hawaii in 1826, Jones supported the missionaries who were teaching the inhabitants to emerge from primitive conditions and to function in a modern world. He spurned the commercial interests which were profiting from ignorance, and the British who preferred to dominate the Hawaiians rather than educate them. On the Pacific coast after the Mexican War, Jones took control of the military contribution fund as a caretaker, dispensing the money for the benefit of the Mexican refugees and the "Californios" who needed specie desperately. If he reimbursed himself for money laid out, or took a commission on the transaction, he felt justified, having spent freely of his own funds when he was commanding ships of the U.S. Navy. He now had no money left. He was, in fact, far in debt. *Sharon* and *Benvenue* had been mortgaged, more than once.⁹¹ Though the court-martial had determined that Jones was not guilty of fraud, his suspension from duty and loss of pay was a painful burden he was to carry to the end of his life.

In 1858, when the country was hastening toward a war to solve the ultimate problem of cheap labor—slavery, the Senate took up bill no. 122 for the relief of Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones. Senator Hale of New Hampshire asked for immediate passage:⁹²

as the bill is a very short one, and has twice already passed the Senate, once on full debate a year ago, and as Commodore Jones is a gallant old sailor, and is now sick, and may not live a great while, I ask that the bill may be put on its passage at once.

Senator Mason of Virginia agreed. Senator Stuart of Michigan objected. The resulting debate rang through the Senate. The bill was tabled and brought up again a month later. And again, it was asserted that Jones was “a gallant old sailor”, but the Senate refused to change the decision of the court-martial to deny Jones his pay. Eventually, Senator Benjamin of Louisiana noted that Commodore Jones:

was the captain of the fleet of gun boats that defended the city of New Orleans in the War of 1812 ... and was wounded in a battle there.

Senator Simmons of Rhode Island declared:

These men have done meritorious service. They have been deprived of their pay. They stand up to be shot at for our benefit. We do not mean to deprive them of their money. If they do not act properly in another capacity, we may censure them for that, but let us give them their pay.

The bill passed the Senate, but was never taken up in the House of Representatives. Jones died two months later. He explained in his will that his country owed him more than enough money to cover his debts, but did nothing to relieve his creditors, or his estate.

Commodore Jones died May 30, 1858.⁹³ His will, written a year before his death, is full of sadness, and not a little bitterness. But he insisted on paying his debts “both principal and interest to the uttermost farthing.”⁹⁴ He hoped there would be no need to sell his real and personal property “since the Government of the United States is justly indebted to me for more money than I owe.” He was generous to his family, providing for his wife and children, a nephew, and a friend. In the sixth bequest, he wrote:

6th. To my ungrateful country which I have long and faithfully served, I commend my widowed wife and our children fondly hoping that those who have the power will not fail to render them that meed of justice and reward which has been so cruelly withheld from their unoffending husband and father.

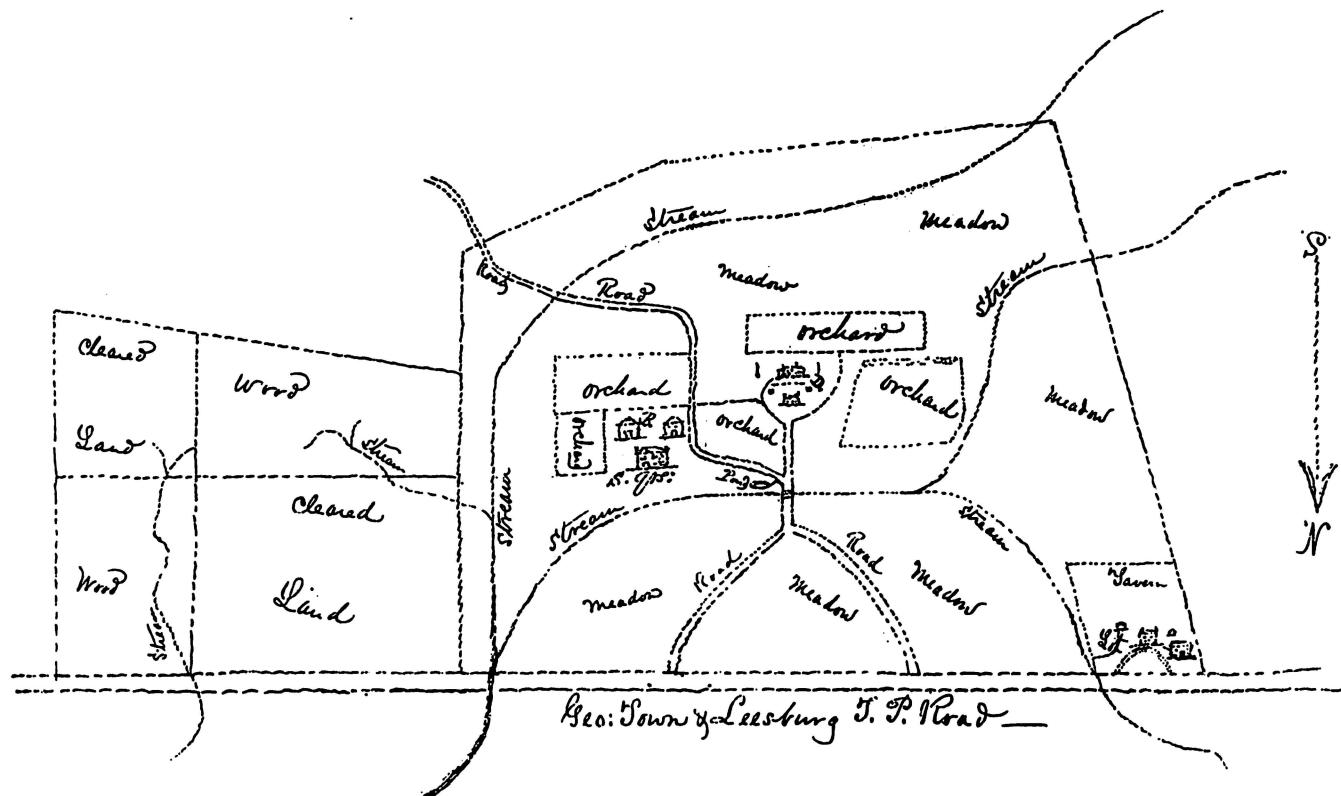
Whatever profits Jones may have made from his gold transactions in California probably went into the Great Falls Manufacturing Company.⁹⁵ This venture was intended to create power from the Great Falls on the Potomac River. A town called Lowell was emerging on lands of the Potomac bypass canal, but the town floundered when railroads proved a more profitable way to carry goods from the east to the interior. Jones’s one hundred shares of stock indicate a heavy investment in a project that dreamed of

power for the cities and probably railroads to expand the nation. Jones, in recommending Benicia, California, as a naval repair station, may have considered it as a possible terminal for a cross-country railroad. But Jones was not a business man. The Great Falls Manufacturing Company was never a financial success. Though it continued to operate with new officers and directors for several decades after his death, the company was involved in numerous lawsuits⁹⁶ and, at a meeting of the stockholders on March 30, 1895, it was unanimously resolved to sell all the rights of the company in lands, water power, canals, dams, and powerhouses to the Great Falls Power Company for \$15,000, reserving only its claims against the U.S. Government for damages for lands taken and water diverted for the construction of the aqueduct dam.⁹⁷

Jones was buried in the churchyard of Lewinsville Presbyterian Church. His grave was unmarked during the turmoil of the Civil War when the church itself was involved in a short battle that pitted Colonel Isaac I. Stevens and the 79th New York Highlanders against Colonel J.E.B. Stuart and the 1st Virginia Cavalry. After the war, when Lieutenant Meriwether Patterson Jones died, his will provided money to erect a headstone for father and son in the cemetery.⁹⁸

At the death of the commodore, Reverend McKee lost his principal champion among the members of the Lewinsville congregation. The slavery issue had been festering for some time. Lewinsville Church had been formed as a part of the Old School Presbyterian Church which was southern, or pro-slavery, in its outlook. The New School Presbyterian Church had met in 1857 and adopted resolutions asking the membership to repudiate the doctrine that slavery is "an ordinance of God." The church did not go the full way toward abolition, but urged its members to withdraw their support from the "peculiar institution."⁹⁹ Mr. McKee seemed not to want to become involved in the controversy. Within a year after Jones's death, McKee was asked by the congregation to leave.

Although the commodore's will provided money to extinguish the debt of the minister's house (the Manse) there was no money in the estate to support his generosity. The government had lost interest in the plight of the "gallant old sailor" and his family. Mary, after a delay of six months and a search for documents that would prove she was the wife of Commodore Jones, was finally awarded a Navy pension of \$50 a month.¹⁰⁰ This was reduced to \$30 a month as the war swept over the Lewinsville area which was considered by the government as rebel territory. In 1863, the encampment of the 5th Pennsylvania Artillery and the 13th New York Cavalry on



Plat of Sharon. Exhibit "B" in file of Mary W. Jones, Claim #21622. Southern Claims Commission Case Files 1877-1883, Box 353, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Prospect Hill, so near to *Sharon*, convinced Mary and her unmarried daughter Martha to leave. When they returned, *Sharon* was a shambles. They lived in the church Manse until their home could be repaired. Mary tried to get compensation for the damage caused by Union troops to her property.¹⁰¹ She asked payment for the loss of livestock, farm equipment, and food, estimating her losses at nearly \$10,000. In her plea to the Court of Claims, Mary mentioned her husband's distinguished naval career, his valuable services during the War of 1812 in the defense of New Orleans. She also mentioned the contributions of her eldest son, Lieutenant Commander Meriwether Patterson Jones, "who served with distinction in the U.S. Navy for 25 years." The Court of Claims considered her case, ruling that, in spite of the record of the commodore and the eldest son, the daughters Mary and Martha had expressed rebellious sentiments during the war and were considered disloyal. Mary was awarded \$2041.36.

The Lewinsville Presbyterian Church suffered severe damage during the Civil War. It, too, applied for compensation from the Court of Claims. Martha Jones testified:¹⁰²

I am the daughter of the late Commodore Jones. I was born in 1833 at Sharon Farms, Fairfax County, Va., about two miles from Lewinsville, Va., at which place I lived until after the Civil war. I was well acquainted with the Lewinsville Church property as it was our family church, my father having been interested in its organization many years ago. I distinctly remember that the grounds and buildings of the church were occupied by the Federal troops. I saw the buildings just before the war broke out, during the war and immediately after the war, and can testify that the parsonage barn was totally destroyed and the Church parsonage and school house were so damaged that nothing but the frames of the buildings were left standing. Windows, doors, siding, fences, seats from the church were either taken from the premises or destroyed.

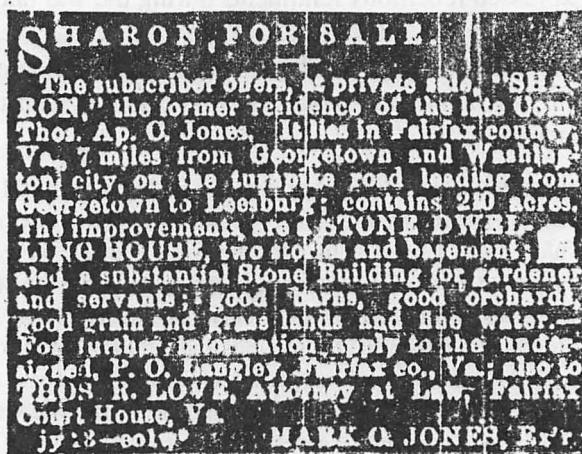
I remember receiving an invitation from a Captain in the Federal Army to attend a service in the Lewinsville church which he said he would hold for the boys. I could not accept the invitation as it was no fit place for a Lady, the Captain saying that he was sorry he could not make it most comfortable for us as the seats had been removed.

The church was further demolished during the War until it was not possible for any one to hold a service in it, the whole place being dismantled: seats, pulpit, carpet, stoves, windows and sides having disappeared.

The Court of Claims ruled that the petition was reasonable and that the church had been loyal to the Union throughout the war. It was awarded \$1760 for repairs.

In the spring of 1864, Herman Melville came to Prospect Hill where he joined the encampment of the 13th New York Cavalry.¹⁰³ His cousin, Colonel H. S. Gansevoort, was in Vienna at brigade headquarters. It is unlikely that Melville was aware that he was visiting the estate of his old commodore, Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones, dead six years.

About half of Jones's real estate, including *Benvenue* and part of *Sharon*, had been sold in the fall of 1858.¹⁰⁴ On July 23, 1869, Mark C. Jones, executor of his father's will, placed an ad in the *Alexandria Gazette* for the sale of the remainder of *Sharon*.



Creditors were petitioning the Fairfax County court for payment of Jones's debts. The court appointed commissioners to determine the acreage remaining in the estate and to examine all liens and claims against it. In 1877, 258 acres of *Sharon* were conveyed to William Fletcher for \$11,212.12.¹⁰⁵

For some years after the war, Mary Walker Carter Jones lived at *Sharon*, though the farm was in litigation until it was finally sold by court decree. On a winter day, twenty-seven years after his father's death, Mark Jones wrote in his diary.¹⁰⁶

On Friday, February 20, 1885, at about 11 a.m., our beloved Mother died—quietly passed away. She died in the fulness of the hope of the

Gospel of her Blessed Savior—her sorrowing children mourn their loss.

Funeral services were held the next Sunday at Lewinsville, with the Reverend Joseph Bittinger and the Reverend D. H. Riddle, Jr., both former pastors at Lewinsville, officiating. Although her grave is unmarked, Mary is buried, according to her descendants, in the Jones plot head to head with her husband, where now a large boxwood is growing.

The senators said the commodore was a gallant old sailor, but the Congress never reinstated his pay. Jones was surely a tough commander, as were all the captains of those magnificent frigates, but the punishments he meted out to his crews were fair and in strict accordance with the Articles of War. The punishment Jones suffered as a result of his decisions made in crises, and based on his best judgment, was certainly undeserved. Nor has he been credited with keeping California and Hawaii out of British hands. In the 1850's, Congress, grappling with the nation's emerging social conscience, turned away from the old commodore and the period he represented, and surrendered him to the hard metaphors of the great American novelist, Herman Melville.

Notes

¹ Abstracts of Officers, 1805-1855. Microfilm M330, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Thomas ap Catesby Jones, 1855. Claim for bounty land for service in War of 1812. Warrant No. 31396 for 160 acres. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

² Report on the *Chesapeake* affair: Great Britain. American State Papers, Foreign Relations Series, 1807. No.205:6-7, 18-23.

³ Alfred T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812*, v.II. Chapter XVII:389-390.

⁴ William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy, a history*, v.VI. Sampson Low, Marston and Company, London.

⁵ Ibid; Records of the Court of Inquiry in New Orleans held May 15-19,1815. M273, National Archives, Washington D.C.

⁶ Lyle Saxon, *Lafitte, the Pirate*, The Century Company, New York, 1930.

⁷ Records of the Court, op.cit; "Complaints of Subaltern Officers of the Navy and Marine Corps." American State Papers, Naval Affairs, v.I. 15th Congress, 1st Session, No.1523453.

⁸ John K. Gott, "A Genealogy of the Turberville Family." The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Va., *Yearbook*, v.11:58 (1971); Judge L.H. Jones of Win-

chester, Kentucky, *Family History: Captain Roger Jones of London and Virginia*. Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, NY, 1891; Mrs. Walter H. Kreamer, interview.

⁹ Gott, op.cit:49.

¹⁰ Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak: The Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County*, Virginia, Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1977:268.

¹¹ Trudie Sundberg and John K. Gott, "George Turberville's Grant on the Potomac ...," The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Va., *Yearbook*, v.11:1 (1971).

¹² Westmoreland County Will Book v.20.

¹³ Sundberg and Gott, op.cit.

¹⁴ Fairfax County Chancery Final File #14h, *Jones vs. Jones*, 1816.

¹⁵ Fredericksburg Chancery Suit *Middleton, etc. vs. Beale, etc.*, 1830.

¹⁶ Fairfax County Deed Book Z₂:318.

¹⁷ Ibid:321.

¹⁸ Ibid:309.

¹⁹ Fairfax County Deed Book D₃:583.

²⁰ Thomas ap Catesby Jones, "Prize Essay on the Renovation of Worn-Out Lands." *The American Farmer*, v.IX No.2, Baltimore, March 1854.

²¹ Ellen Anderson, *Salona, Fairfax County, Virginia*. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, February, 1979.

²² Ibid.

²³ Pension records of Thomas ap C. Jones, case of Mary W.C. Jones, September 24, 1858, National Archives; Louise C. Curran, "The Memories of Sharon," *McLean Remembers Again*, Sound Publications.

²⁴ Udolpho Theodore Bradley, *The Contentious Commodore*. Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1933:57.

²⁵ Fairfax County Will Book N₁:49.

²⁶ *Jones vs. Jones*, op.cit; *Middleton, etc. vs. Beale, etc.*, op.cit.

²⁷ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: a history of the Hawaiian Islands*. Macmillan, New York, 1968:77; Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Mutiny on the Globe*, Random House, New York, 1925; Albertine Loomis, *Grapes of Canaan: Hawaii 1820, the True Story of Hawaii's Missionaries*. Hawaiian Mission Childrens' Society, HI, 1951.

²⁸ Hull to Jones on frigate *United States* in Callao Bay, May 25, 1826. Executive Document No.108, 29th Congress, First Session:13-14.

²⁹ Frank W. Gapp, "The Kind-Eyed Chief: forgotten champion of Hawaii's freedom." *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, v.19:101 (1985).

³⁰ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands*, 1849 reprint. Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, VT, 1981:303.

³¹ Thomas ap Catesby Jones to James C. Dobbin, Secretary of the Navy, letter dated December 29, 1855 (1826?). Captains letters, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³² House Executive Document No.92:20. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³³ Tradition among descendants of the commodore, according to the late Martha Reading Kreamer of Black Mountain, NC.

³⁴ Bradley, op.cit:87-104.

³⁵ Papers of Governor Thomas Walker Gilmer. Letter to Gilmer from George Mason of Hollin Hall dated May 12, 1840, in reference to a letter from Jones to Mason. VA State Library, Richmond.

³⁶ *Alexandria Gazette*, February 27, 1841.

³⁷ Frank W. Gapp, "The Dueling Pledge." *The Retired Officer*, May 1978:29.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jones to Upshur, March 19, 1942. Pacific Squadron Letters, M89. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁰ Frank W. Gapp, "The 'Capture' of Monterey in 1842." U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, March 1979:46.

⁴¹ Jones's letters to Upshur, March 8 and September 13, 1842. Pacific Squadron Letters, M89. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴² Jose Marie de Bocanegra to Daniel Webster, May 12, 1842. Notes from the Mexican legation to the Department of State, 1821-1906. M54, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴³ Waddy Thompson to Daniel Webster, July 30, 1842. Dispatches from U.S. ministers to Mexico, 1823-1906. M97, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Gapp, "Capture ..." op.cit.

⁴⁶ William H. Meyers, *Journal of a Cruise to California and the Sandwich Islands in the United States Sloop Cyane*. John Haskell Kemble, editor. Book Club of California, San Francisco, 1955:6.

⁴⁷ S. R. Franklin, *Memories of a Rear-Admiral*, Harper & Brothers, NY, 1898:52.

⁴⁸ Charles Roberts Anderson, ed., *Journal of a Cruise to the Pacific Ocean, 1842-1844, in the Frigate United States*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1937:44.

⁴⁹ Executive Document No. 166:91. 27th Congress, 3rd Session. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁰ Thomas ap Catesby Jones, "Visit to Los Angeles in 1843." Reprint. *Daily Alto Californian*; Gapp, "Capture ..." op.cit.

⁵¹ *Journal of Rear Admiral Richard Thomas*. Admiralty letter dated February 4, 1843, to Honorable Sidney Herbert, Secretary of the Admiralty, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners ADM 50/228 v.199. Public Records Office, London.

⁵² Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, v.1, chapter 2, "The Paulet Episode." University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1938.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "Report of Titus Coan on his missionary work in Hilo, 1773-1844." *The Missionary Herald*, v.XL, No.6, June 1844. Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Jones to Upshur from Valparaiso, November 21, 1843. Pacific Squadron Letters, M89. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁷ Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log*. Harcourt Brace, NY, 1951:165.

⁵⁸ Jones to Upshur, November 21, 1843, op.cit.

⁵⁹ Bradley, op.cit:171.

⁶⁰ Herman Melville, *Typee*. 1846. Appendix.

⁶¹ Herman Melville, *White Jacket, or the World in a Man-of-War*. Chapter 6: The Quarter Deck Officers." v.V of the writings of Herman Melville. Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library. Evanston and Chicago, 1974.

⁶² Bradley, op.cit:24-25.

⁶³ Melville, *White Jacket* ... op.cit:156.

⁶⁴ Fairfax County Deed Book N₃:321.

⁶⁵ Frank W. Gapp, *The Lewinsville Presbyterian Church: a concise history of the congregation*. Prepared for the 130th anniversary of the church, October 17, 1976.

⁶⁶ Jones to Secretary of the Navy, November 27, 1847. Pacific Squadron Letters, M89, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁷ Court Martial of John Smith, August 9, 1848. Judge Advocate General's Office. M273, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁸ Gapp, "The Kind-Eyed Chief," op.cit:119.

⁶⁹ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, v.6 (1848-1859):264,281.

⁷⁰ Court Martial of Captain Jones. Senate Executive Document No.45, 31st Congress, 2nd Session. v.V:13-16.

⁷¹ Bradley, op.cit:194.

⁷² Melville, *White Jacket* ... op.cit.

⁷³ Ibid. (Historical note:403-440).

⁷⁴ New Bedford *Mercury*, April 10, 1850. New Bedford, MA.

⁷⁵ Melville to Dana, New York, May 1, 1850; *The Letters of Herman Melville*. Davis and Gilman, editors. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1960:107.

⁷⁶ Court Martial of Captain Jones, op.cit:11, 269.

⁷⁷ Ibid. v.V. Complete report on the court-martial.

⁷⁸ Bradley, op.cit:204, 206.

⁷⁹ Fletcher Pratt, *The Navy, a history*. Garden City Pub. Co. Garden City, NY, 1941.

⁸⁰ Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, London and New York, 1851.

⁸¹ Ibid, chap. 28, "Ahab."

⁸² Bradley, op.cit.

⁸³ Jones, "Prize Essay ..." op.cit.

⁸⁴ *Warrenton Flag*, quoted by *Alexandria Gazette*, March 22, 1854.

⁸⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, March 25, 1854.

⁸⁶ Fairfax County Will Book Z₁:11.

⁸⁷ Gapp, "The Lewinsville Presbyterian Church ..." op.cit.

⁸⁸ Sundberg and Gott, op.cit.

⁸⁹ Mayo S. Stuntz, "Development of Postal Service in Fairfax County, Virginia, 1750-1890." The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Va., *Yearbook*, v.14:23 (1976-1977).

⁹⁰ Reverend C. B. McKee, *Diary*, 1857. In possession of Frank W. Gapp.

⁹¹ Fairfax County Deed Books H₃:1, J₃:383, V₃:113, X₃:111.

⁹² *The Congressional Globe*, 35th Congress, 1st Session:542, 1002.

⁹³ Tombstone, Lewinsville Presbyterian Church cemetery.

⁹⁴ Fairfax County Will Book Z₁:11, op.cit.

⁹⁵ Fairfax County Chancery Final File #60p, *Love vs. Neilson and Bradley*, 1852; Fairfax County Deed Book Y₃:119.

⁹⁶ Fairfax County Chancery Final File #45a, *Henry's admr. vs. Great Falls Manufacturing Company*, 1880; #14D, *Great Falls Manufacturing Company vs. Jackson*, 1894.

⁹⁷ Fairfax County Deed Book T₅:516.

⁹⁸ Fairfax County Will Book A₂:27.

⁹⁹ Clifton E. Olmstead, *Religion in America Past and Present*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1961:98.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas ap Catesby Jones. Pension records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰¹ Mary W. Jones, U.S. Court of Claims, Claim #21622. Record Group 217, Box 353. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰² Lewinsville Presbyterian Church. U.S. Court of Claims, Claim #11028. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰³ Stanton Garner, "Melville's Scout Toward Aldie." *Melville Society Extracts*, September 1982.

¹⁰⁴ Fairfax County Deed Book B₄:212,214; Fairfax County Chancery Final File #56y, *Jones' executor vs Follin's admr.*, 1870.

¹⁰⁵ Fairfax County Deed Book U₄:374.

¹⁰⁶ Mark Jones's diary. In Possession of Thomas ap Catesby Jones's descendants.

Griffin Dobson: Servant to a Commodore

by
Frank W. Gapp

Those who write about Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones soon notice the presence of Griffin Dobson, a servant of the commodore's who accompanied him on at least two trips abroad—to California and Hawaii in 1842-1844 and again to California during the Gold Rush period in 1848-1850. Although Navy rules forbade slaves aboard U.S. vessels of war, Jones had special permission from the Secretary of the Navy to take Dobson with him as a body servant.¹ Jones had been wounded in a naval fire just before the Battle of New Orleans and still carried the musket ball in his left shoulder. He could not raise his left arm above his shoulder and needed help in dressing and other physical duties on shipboard. Dobson was usually referred to as his servant, and was carried aboard the *United States* and the *Ohio* as a "seaman."

Commodore Jones came from a long line of southerners who had inherited slaves, though his father, Major Catesby Jones of Northumberland County, is said to have freed many of his slaves.² But some Virginians were reluctant to free slaves unless they had a skill and could find work so as not to become a public charge. Owners generally thought their freed slaves would do better if they had a trade or craft—blacksmith, hostler, horse trainer, cook. When the commodore's sister, Miss Elizabeth (Betty) Lee Jones, wrote her will in 1822, a year after the division of the Turberville lands among the Jones descendants, she provided specific instructions for the disposal of slaves on her land along Georgetown Pike in Fairfax County, bordering her brother Thomas's land on the north.³ She wanted all her slaves released to the American Colonization Society, referring to it as "the American Society for colonizing the free people of color of the United States." She listed the trustees: Bushrod Washington, Francis S. Key, Walter Jones, Reverend S. B. Balch, and twelve others.

The American Colonization Society was in its infancy at that time, having been organized in 1816-1817 and supported by idealists for a few years. In 1819 Congress appropriated \$100,000 for returning to Africa negroes who had been illegally imported into the U.S. In 1821, R. F. Stock-

ton of the U.S. Navy purchased land in Africa which eventually became the new country of Liberia.⁴ The Society intended to transport only free negroes, not slaves. But there was concern among southerners that freeing slaves might cause an economic crisis. Abolitionists were demanding that slaves be freed whether or not they had skills, could remain in the south, be transported to Africa, or rush north. In her will, Betty Jones gave her slaves to the Society in trust, for either "colonization and complete emancipation, or ... preparatory education and discipline." Until the Society would be in a position to carry out the trust, the slaves were to be apportioned among her relatives. Betty wanted her slaves to receive religious instruction, to be provided skills and full emancipation for a future in Africa. Only three slaves, Letty, Amy, and Nancy, "too old either for the purpose of colonization or of intermediate service," were to be freed at Betty's death. All her other slaves, if not colonized within ten years, were to be "absolutely and unconditionally emancipated and free."

Betty gave the precise method she wanted used in disposing of her slaves after her death. First, she gave her brother Thomas ap Catesby the duty of paying off her just debts. He received her land abutting his on the north which she received from the division of the estate of their mother Lettice Corbin Turberville Jones.⁵ She excepted from this land four acres for a church. Thomas was also "to continue to Amy & Nancy the Asylum they now enjoy of the house and garden on the land devised to him as aforesaid so long as they may need it, as a place of Shelter." In addition, he was to receive the children of Nancy. Another brother, Philip, was given Arianne and her children. The four remaining women and girls, Maria, Belinda, Mima, and Kitty, were given to relatives (including the brothers) on strict condition that they be released as soon as the Society was ready to take them. All the slaves were given, except as specifically noted,

upon the express condition and with an implicit reliance upon the honor and good faith of my said relations that the said slave respectively allotted to them shall receive such moral and religious instruction and be so habituated to the useful arts of domestic life as to prepare them as well as circumstances will allow for their ultimate destination of emancipated colonists ...

The will continued:

As to my boy, Davy, son of Nancy, it is my earnest wish and recommendation ... that he be immediately put to school on some public foundation, in order to be educated as a missionary to Africa, or as a

minister of the Gospel, to be settled in the proposed colony in Africa under the patronage of the said society ...

In 1823, an Alexandria chapter of the American Colonization Society was established. It quickly announced "There are now one hundred and twenty free people of color ready to sail for Africa this winter as soon as funds can be raised to defray the expenses of transportation."⁶ In the entire period from 1820 to 1856 the American Colonization Society helped 3,315 Virginia negroes emigrate to Africa. A total of 11,000 persons were transported to Liberia before 1860.⁷ The movement aroused fierce opposition in the north, which claimed the transportation simply strengthened slavery in the south by removing freed negroes from the country. Furthermore, even its advocates believed that the natural increase in the negro population in the entire country was enough to overwhelm the emigration movement. Estimates have placed the countrywide annual increase in colored population during this period at 40,000. Faced with such numbers, and insufficient funding, the Society was fighting a losing battle from the very beginning. It declined rapidly after the Civil War and was terminated in 1916.

It seems likely that most of the provisions of Betty's will, as concerned the slaves, were carried out over the years by the executors, Walter, Roger, and Thomas ap Catesby Jones, and Spencer Ball. The children of Nancy came into the custody of Thomas ap Catesby as trustee. The number of Nancy's children, and their names, are not part of the public record. In 1848, while the commodore was at sea, an affidavit was filed in the Fairfax County court attesting to the status of one of Nancy's children:⁸

The bearer hereof Judy, alias Judy Dobson, a mulatto woman, about Twenty nine years of age, five feet one inch high, a small scar on the corner of the left Eye, and a scar on the left arm, is the Daughter of Nancy, a free woman of colour, and Emancipated by the last Will and Testament of Elizabeth L. Jones, deceased, as appears from the affidavit of Spencer M. Ball on file in my office, hath with her her five children to wit, David ten years of age, who has a large scar on the back of the head, occasioned by a burn. Emanuel abt. nine years of age, Thomas about six years of age, Silas about three years of age, and Nancy about One year of age, who are also free ...

Dr. Donald Sweig in his transcription of the *Registrations of Free Negroes* ...⁹ states:

The 1806 law requiring all slaves freed after this date to leave Virginia was intended to restrict the growth of free Negroes as a group. Such

growth apparently did not overly concern Fairfax whites however for large numbers of former slaves freed in Fairfax County after 1806 remained in Fairfax and registered as free blacks.

Each registration, however, required the court clerk to specify how the registrant claimed his or her freedom. This was, after all, the whole purpose of the registrations—to establish that a black man or woman was indeed free and not a slave. Many of the registrations make reference to an “original registration this day surrendered,” meaning that the person registering had previously registered and was using that certificate to establish his or her freedom. Normally only a person not having such a prior registration would claim freedom from the will of, for example, George Washington. When taken with other evidence that the registration requirements were laxly enforced the incidence of Washington’s former slaves claiming their freedom by his will twenty years and more after they became free suggests that large numbers of free blacks did live in Fairfax County for years without registering at all.

Along with Judy and her children, five other negroes freed by the will of Elizabeth Lee Jones were registered at March, 1848, court. Two more were registered in January of 1849.¹⁰ No registration exists in Fairfax County for Griffin Dobson. As a close associate of Commodore Jones, traveling with him for long periods of time, perhaps he, and Jones, felt that none was needed. Griffin, like Judy, may have been one of the children of Nancy. If so, he was raised from childhood at *Sharon*, the commodore’s estate, though in 1822, when Betty Jones wrote her will and died shortly after, Jones himself was a young lieutenant just returned from the Mediterranean and starting up a farm. An adult servant and her young children may have been very helpful to him. The enduring bond between Griffin Dobson and the commodore may have formed at that time.

Griffin would probably have been too young to accompany Jones to the Pacific in 1826 when Jones first visited the Hawaiian Islands and concluded a treaty with the island nation. But he would have grown up, married, and started a family by 1841 when Jones was appointed to command the Pacific Squadron with the frigate *United States* as his flagship. After readying the ship at Norfolk for its sea journey, Jones, with a full crew and his servant Dobson, sailed across the Atlantic, around Cape Horn, to Monterey and Honolulu in an eventful cruise that included an attack on Monterey and the freeing of Hawaii from British rule before returning to Virginia in 1844. In 1847, as the war with Mexico was coming to a close,

Dobson accompanied Jones on the *U.S.S. Cumberland* to Panama, then overland across the Isthmus, where they boarded a British steam packet to Callao in Peru. There another packet took them to Valparaiso where the commodore took command of the *Ohio*, all within fifty days. As the *Ohio* sailed toward California, picking up Mexican refugees along the way, the crew began "bothering" Dobson about being a slave. Jones reported to the Secretary of the Navy:¹¹

... the men on board the *Ohio*, both white and colored, would not let him have any peace, and that they had offered to raise by subscription a sufficient fund to buy him ... if I would agree to it. Griffin, being a faithful servant, and seeing how unpleasantly he was situated, I consented to the proposition, but with the express stipulation that the sale would be of no effect until we both returned to Virginia.

What was bothering the crew, evidently, was that Griffin was a mulatto. At that time, a mulatto was the first generation offspring of a negro and a white.¹² In the eyes of the crew, Dobson was already half white and therefore half free. Technically, Dobson, if a son of Nancy, was not a slave, having been freed by the will of Betty Jones ten years after her death. But Jones had accepted Nancy and her children in trust, and he cared for and supported them as members of his own family. His attitude toward them was paternalistic, protective. Perhaps, too, the stipulation that the sale be affected only in Virginia, while in accordance with naval regulations to return the crew to its port of origin, may have been Jones's bid to forestall the loss of Dobson and the crewmen who offered to buy his freedom. Also, California was a free state in which Jones could legally exercise no right of ownership or claim to Griffin's person, or to accept money for his purchase.

It may appear, in the light of twentieth century thinking, that Jones held Dobson in slavery for more than fifteen years, that, as a child of Nancy, he should have been freed in 1833 along with the other slaves of Betty Jones who were not sent to Africa. There is no proof, however, that Dobson was a child of Nancy, only the fact that he shared a surname with Nancy's daughter Judy. Also, the law requiring freed slaves to leave Virginia, though not often enforced, was an ever-present threat to blacks who had strong personal relationships and family ties in the state, giving rise to a practice of white paternalism whereby a free negro, to avoid taxation and possible expulsion, could continue to live in the custody and protection of a white "master." We can be certain that, regardless of the legal aspects of the rela-

tionship between Griffin Dobson and Commodore Jones, it was reciprocal, consensual, and mutually beneficial.

Griffin, as a light-skinned colored person, must have had many attributes that would make it easy for him to get along in a frontier society that already had mixtures of Mexican and Spanish origin. He was popular with the crew, was a seasoned sailor who had learned much from his close attachment to the commodore. In May of 1849, just as the Gold Rush was beginning, Jones yielded to Dobson's pleas and, for \$400 paid by Dobson's friends among the crew, released him to the first wave of gold seekers who would remake California into the Golden State. Opportunities there were limitless. Wages were high (labor was getting \$8 a day!) and Dobson was young and a good worker. Gold was pouring into the pockets of prospectors and was easily available at \$12 an ounce and could be sold on the New York market for \$18 an ounce. Real estate was making many persons wealthy; vegetable farms could command enormous prices for produce. So many crew members left the ships for the gold fields that a new crew had to take the *Ohio* back to the east coast while Jones continued his work in California aboard the *Southampton*, without the services of Griffin Dobson.

On September 22, 1852, three years after Jones released him in California, Dobson returned once more to *Sharon*, to buy from the commodore his wife Cinthia and her five children for \$1200. The deed from Jones to Dobson reads:

Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Ap C. Jones of the County of Fairfax and State of Virginia, in consideration of the sum of One Thousand two hundred Dollars (\$1200) to me in hand paid by Griffin Dobson (a free man of Color) of California, to me in hand paid, at and before the ensealing and delivery of these presents (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged) Have bargained sold and delivered and by these presents do bargain sell and deliver unto the said Griffin Dobson, his wife Cinthia about thirty years old, her children Polly aged about ten years, Watt twelve, Beverly nine, Henry seven and Edmund about five years old, which said slaves I warrant sound and slaves for life. And I the said Thomas Ap C. Jones for myself my Heirs Executors and Administrators will warrant and defend the said slaves unto the said Griffin Dobson his Executors etc from and against all persons whomsoever—In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty second day of September one thousand Eight hundred and fifty two.

Thomas Ap C Jones (Seal)

There is little definite information about Griffin Dobson, whether he could read or write, for instance. We do know that his son Charles was born free ca.1834,¹⁴ that his wife Charity Carter was born free but died by 1840.¹⁵ We know too, that his second wife Cinthia was a slave, and that Dobson purchased her freedom, and the freedom of her children, years before the Civil War broke over a divided nation, and became an early pioneer in the free state of California.

Notes

FCOB = Fairfax Court Order Book

FWB = Fairfax Will Book

FCFF = Fairfax Chancery Final File

FDB = Fairfax Deed Book

¹ Letter, Thomas ap C. Jones to Will Graham, Secretary of the Navy, dated September 24, 1850, in court-martial papers, Senate Executive Document No.43, 31st Congress, 2nd session, v.V.

² Judge L. H. Jones of Winchester, Kentucky, *Family History: Captain Roger Jones of London and Virginia*. Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, NY.

³ FWB N₁:49-56, Will of Elizabeth Lee Jones, 1822.

⁴ *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, Columbia University Press, 1975:83-84.

⁵ FCFF#14h, *Jones vs. Jones*, 1816, 1825.

⁶ T. Michael Miller, "Out of Bondage, a History of the Alexandria Colonization Society," *Alexandria History*, v.VII, 1987.

⁷ *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, op.cit.

⁸ Donald Sweig, Ph.D., ed. *Registrations of Free Negroes, Commencing September Court 1822* ... Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1977:III No.262.

⁹ Ibid: 3,4.

¹⁰ Ibid: No.257-261, 274-275.

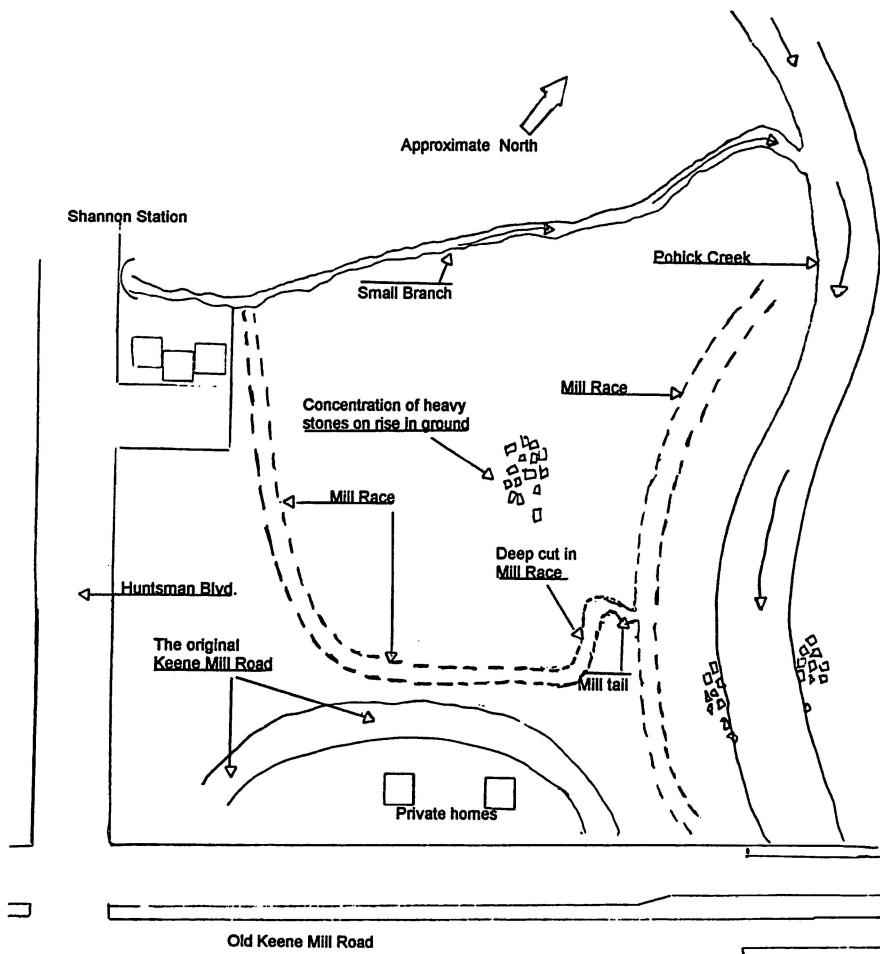
¹¹ Jones's letter to Graham, op.cit.

¹² *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, MA, 1965.

¹³ FDB R₃:126.

¹⁴ Marriage licence of Charles Dobson to Rachael Johnson March 6, 1871; Sweig, op.cit:No.502.

¹⁵ FCOB 1835:24 (January 21, 1840).



Site of Keene's Mill. Diagram not to scale. Drawn by Jack L. Hiller, 1994.

Murder at the Mill: My Search for William H. Keene

by
Jack Lewis Hiller

Mr. Hiller has been a free-lance photojournalist who photographed, among others, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Martin Luther King. He taught History at Groveton and West Potomac High Schools for thirty years. With Martha Williams, he initiated the Fairfax County Public School Archeology Program in 1972, which they jointly conducted until their retirement in 1988. With Valerie Townes, he is now excavating the Barker Home site in Hidden Pond Park, Springfield, Virginia. Mr. Hiller is the current chairman of the Fairfax County History Commission and has been a member since 1981.

“Springfield has no history.” That is what my wife was told back in 1981 when she set out to prepare a script for a slide presentation of Springfield’s history. The speaker was a local high school history teacher who went on to add that “the place was nothing but farmland.”

In the sense that no history had been written the statement was correct. No place has a history until someone writes it. However, what was implied was that there was nothing from which to write a history. No monumental event had taken place in the past that profoundly influenced the course of events. What happened in the lives of individual farmers or tradesmen would not quite fill the bill.

To some people it may appear that Springfield was created in 1949. That was when the Shirley Highway was completed. Like water overflowing the banks of a reservoir, Washington, D.C.’s suburban population flooded the Virginia countryside. Housing developments, shopping centers, schools, churches, and synagogues appeared where empty fields and forests had previously stood. Roads were extended, straightened, widened, created.

Actually, this process had been going on at a much slower pace since the seventeenth century when this land was part of Northumberland County. The land became part of the Northern Neck Proprietary in 1649 at the whim

of the exiled King Charles II of England who set aside more than five million acres for seven of his loyal followers. The whim became a reality when the crown was restored in 1660 and the Proprietary was consolidated under Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax in 1719. The land changed county names three more times (Westmoreland in 1653, Stafford in 1664, and Prince William in 1731) before it became Fairfax in 1742.

But land speculation has always been the name of the game and the largest single land holding in Fairfax County was the 21,996 acres acquired in 1694 from the Proprietary by William Fitzhugh. It was ultimately known as Ravensworth. That property occupied the heart of Fairfax County and most of Springfield long before there was a Fairfax County or a Springfield. Springfield did not have an identity until the Orange and Alexandria Railroad came through in the 1850's and gave that name to a station built on Henry Daingerfield's "Springfield Farm"—close to where the tracks crossed Backlick Road.¹

But there was a community here before there was a name. Few people living in Springfield, and Northern Virginia in general, realize that they are literally living on top of generations that have gone before. To some extent the behavior of those earlier residents has shaped our own behavior. The post World War II population followed established paths like water flowing into ruts worn by time. Of course, the flood reshaped, extended and expanded those ruts—and created new ones. Anyone traveling along Old Keene Mill Road or Rolling Road or Backlick Road must sense that these are old names for old routes. When new families settled into new homes in new developments they put down roots into soil that someone else plowed long ago. Caught up in our world of townhouses, quarter acre lots, green yards, paved roads, and fast moving traffic it is easy not to see a quiet graveyard that may not even be marked, or an occasional artifact that comes to the surface when a new bush is planted, or a ditch that was once a canal now filled in with dirt or debris, or a millrace that serves no mill, or a chimney standing by itself in the woods.

A glance at Beth Mitchell's map of Fairfax County which accompanies her book, *Beginning At A White Oak*,² is revealing. The map shows the original land grants superimposed on a modern map. The rural settlement patterns of large land holdings stand out against the clusters of suburban subdivisions held together by a fine web of roads. This document juxtaposes our past with our present. It heightens the contrast by skipping the evolutionary stages marking the passage from a rural to an urban society.

Dominating the center of the map is Ravensworth plantation. Surrounding Ravensworth are smaller land grants from two to five hundred acres, settled by yeoman farmers who evolved into Fairfax County's antebellum middle class. According to Patricia Hickin:

It is difficult to define the middle class in Fairfax. They are generally thought of as the farmers who owned one to three hundred acres of land and a few slaves, or the tavern owners, innkeepers, millers, carriagemakers, surveyors, and the like.³

Among the earliest families to settle along Pohick Creek, just outside the boundary of Ravensworth, in what would become the West Springfield area were the Keenes, the Halls and the Barkers. I became aware of the interrelations between these families only after I decided to investigate the origins and fate of Keene's Mill. The Fairfax County History Commission, of which I am a member, encourages research into local history; and since I live along Keene Mill Road close to the mill site I decided to make it a spare-time project.

Before I started the project, Edith M. Sprouse, another member of the Commission, who spends a lot of time in the circuit court archives, handed me two sheets of paper containing copies of abstracts of court actions taken against William H. Keene. It seems that Keene was tried for murdering Lewis Q. Hall and was condemned to hang on January 30, 1857.⁴ Could this be the owner of the mill? Who was Lewis Q. Hall? Why did Keene murder him? Another abstract referred to Keene being sent to the penitentiary for more than a year—implying that he didn't hang.⁵ And that too was a curious thing. If he was condemned to hang, why didn't he hang? My search for a history of Keene Mill was starting on an intriguing note.

Edith continued to throw documents at me. Some weeks later she handed me four more copies of handwritten documents. The handwriting was heavy. The original papers were splotched with ink. On some of them words were scratched out and new words inserted. They were hard to read. Close inspection revealed that one of the documents was the official report of an "inquisition" held at the "house of Maria Sutherland ... on the 30th day of Oct. 1855" over the body of Lewis Q. Hall. It went on to state that: "Lewis Q. Hall came to his death by William Keene on the 27th day of Oct. 1855 by means of a knife in the hands of said Keene, ..." The statement was signed by T. J. Suddath J.P., Acting Coroner, and twelve jurors of inquest.⁶

A second document was a deposition given by Lewis Q. Hall to T. J. Suddath, Justice of the Peace, in the presence of Calvin Hollister, M.D. on

the 29th of October, the day he died. Hall stated that he had no ill will toward Keene at the time he went to see him. He added:

I, the said Lewis Q. Hall, went to the house of said William H. Keene on the 27th day of Oct. 1855 in company with John W. Barker and inquired for Miss Maria Hall he informed me that she was not there and if I wished to see her I must go and look for her; he the said Keene told me that I knew the path that I came and I must go out of his house which I did followed by John W. Barker when I left his door yard followed by said Keene and proceeded at two steps toward his mill he threw his arm around me and inflicted the wound and the instrument with which he done it I did not see; but I told John W. Barker when I got in the road I was cut; and he has cut me as well as I can recollect. I did not go see W. Keene on any Business of mine and his. I was security with John Sutherland for Miss Maria Hall who lives with him and said note was payable to Isaac Hall Executor of Cassandra Hall for which he was a going to proceed according to law against us and I wished to inform her that if the money was paid that it would save costs.⁷

To this statement Lewis Q. Hall signed his name for the last time.

The third document was the testimony of John W. Barker. He verified Hall's statement about going to Keene's house to find Maria Hall who apparently lived with Keene, and of being sent away by Keene. Then Barker recited what happened from his perspective:

after we came out Keene followed us, he passed me and I saw him run his hand into his pantaloons pocket take out a knife, which very much resembles the knife now presented to me (here the knife was handed the witness by the Coroner). He the prisoner Wm. H. Keene went up to L Q Hall the Deed. and threw his left hand over his neck, and with his right hand in which he held the knife reached round the decd. and stabbed him on the left side; the Dced. immidiately said to me, that he (Keene) had cut him; Keene then returned to the House, and as he passed me (the witniss) asked me to come in and take something to drink; he then went in and unlocked his desk, and finding no liquor, said to me that Mariah had gone off and carried away all the liquor, while I was talking with Keene; the Deced. came on, towards this house; I followed him and over took him inside of Mrs. Southerland fence; I assisted him to Mrs. Southerlands house; and when I over took him his bowels had come out through the cut. I carried him the Decd. to the house, and went immediately to Isaac Hall's who went directly for the Doctor.⁸

It would appear from these documents that Keene (who we now know did operate the mill) attacked and murdered Lewis Q. Hall without provocation. Not only was Keene's attack bizarre, but what followed was equally odd. After Keene stabbed Hall he turned to Hall's companion, John W. Barker, and invited him back into the house for a drink. Stranger still, Barker apparently accepted the invitation even though his friend was wounded and told him so. This behavior suggests that all three men were not rational.

Further, the documents raise additional questions. Why did both Hall and Barker emphasize that the purpose of their visit was to find Maria(h) Hall, not to seek William Keene? What had been the relationship between these three men prior to the incident of October 27? Who were the various other Halls mentioned? What was Maria(h) Hall's relationship to Keene and to Lewis Q. Hall? What was Keene's explanation of what happened that day? What other documents might be available to help us gain insight about these people and this incident? These questions momentarily overshadowed my curiosity about the mill.

The census of 1850 reveals that William H. Keene was a miller; that he was thirty-five years of age and he lived with a Jane Keene who was seventy-six.⁹ Keene must have been forty at the time of the killing. There is no listing for Maria or Cassandra or Lewis Q. Hall. There is no reference to John W. Barker. Maria Sutherland, whose house was the scene of the coroner's inquest, is shown as being thirty years old and married to John Sutherland, a farmer, forty-three years of age. They had five young children ranging in age from thirteen years to three months.¹⁰ The inquest documents referred to "Mrs. Sutherland's" house. This suggests that there was no Mr. Sutherland (the preferred spelling) by 1855.¹¹ There was an Isaac Hall living in Alexandria. He was a forty-eight-year-old cooper.¹² Perhaps this was the person living near Keene's mill by 1855.

The Alexandria Gazette carried three brief stories about the incident. The November 1, 1855 issue stated, under the heading of "Murder," that "a man named Hall was stabbed by a man named Keene, near Sangster's station ... he died on Monday." It added: "There had been difficulty between them." Two days later (November 3, 1855) *The Gazette* noted: "William H. Keene ... has been committed to jail at Fairfax Court House." A third article published one year later (November 15, 1856) under the heading "Fairfax Circuit Court" stated:

The case of the commonwealth vs. Keene was given to the jury on Friday evening, after able and powerful arguments had been made by

Messrs. Edwards, Thomas and Scott, in behalf of the prisoner, and by Mr. Dulany on the part of the Commonwealth, and on Saturday morning they rendered their verdict finding the prisoner guilty of murder in the first degree. Immediately upon its rendition the counsel for the unfortunate criminal moved for a new trial, but his Honor, Judge Tyler was constrained to deny the motion—the point raised not being of sufficient importance to warrant a compliance therewith. They took an appeal from the Judge's decision and will carry the case up to the Court of Appeals on the point raised. The Judge then passed the sentence upon the wretched criminal.

We know from the court order books that Keene's sentence was that he was to be "hanged by the neck until he be dead on January 30, 1857."¹³ It is curious that *The Gazette* article did not state what the sentence was or what the "powerful arguments" on behalf of the prisoner were.

While I was reeling through page after page of *The Gazette* on microfilm in the Alexandria Library's Lloyd House Edith Sprouse again appeared (she was on an unrelated quest) and directed my attention to an index of obituary notices¹⁴ appearing in that publication. Turning to that source I found an entry under William H. Keene dated January 23, 1858. Anticipating an explanation of his death I threw in the appropriate reel and whizzed to the right page. But there was no obituary there. Instead there was a small boldfaced column heading: **The Case of Keene**. Under the heading was a letter from William H. Dulany, Attorney for the Commonwealth, to the Governor of Virginia dated January 8, 1858. In the letter Dulany protests the governor's decision to grant a reprieve to Keene and the commutation of his punishment to ten years' imprisonment. More importantly Dulany wants to establish that he was not consulted and did not in any way participate in the decision. Dulany claims that he has been "censured by some of the citizens of the county for having prepared a statement of evidence in a criminal prosecution essentially variant from that elicited at the trial of the cause."

The governor's response to Dulany's letter is included in the column. The governor reviewed his actions pointing out that he twice "resisted the prisoner in order to obtain an abstract of all the evidence." He went on to state:

On the 19th of March and finally on the 23rd of April, 1857, I ordered the Commonwealth's Attorney to be written to. The Secretary of the Commonwealth, I believe, sent the letter to Mr. D. Funsten, of Alexandria. He informed me that he communicated the contents to the coun-

sel of the prisoner; that one of them, the associate of Mr. Thomas in the defence, applied to you, and you declined to make out an abstract owing to the lapse of time.

The governor pointed out that “you had been afforded every opportunity to make a statement of the case , as I supposed, and had made no contradictory statement to that made by prisoner’s counsel ...” The governor’s actions were based on “all the memoranda of testimony laid before me.” He concludes:

there is no ground of censuring you for the pardon in this case. I take the whole responsibility of it; and a review of the case confirms me in the decision I made. Very respectfully, yours, &c.,

Henry A. Wise

Dulany underlined the governor’s last point in a final paragraph:

It will be perceived that I never furnished any “statement” of evidence in the case to the Governor, and was not called upon by him to do so. I will merely state that I never saw any “statement” of evidence furnished him, and could therefore neither contradict nor concur in such “statement.”

We now know a lot more about why Keene did not hang. At least we know who was responsible for making the decision not to hang him. We know that he was sentenced to prison for ten years. But we do not know how or why Governor Wise reached this decision. We also know that there were some people very unhappy with the decision—among them William H. Dulany. It was curious that the governor chose to communicate with Dulany, a Commonwealth’s Attorney, through intermediaries, including Keene’s own lawyers, when he was in the process of making this decision. Why didn’t Dulany protest loudly when he found out the governor was considering commuting the sentence? It seems that with each new discovery there follows a new set of questions.

It wasn’t until June 1992 that I was able to visit the Virginia Archives located in the Virginia State Library (now The Library of Virginia) in Richmond. Armed with the Dulany-Wise exchange from *The Alexandria Gazette* which cited the governor’s “message to the General Assembly of Virginia, communicating your reasons for the reprieves, pardons, and commutations of punishment granted by you to criminals; since the last session of the Legislature ...,” I thought I might be able to find that message. The staff archivist was not encouraging. He stated that there were no records kept of governors’ messages to the legislature. I thought that very strange.

Surely, a secretary recorded all the proceedings of that body. Still, he was the archivist and he knew his business better than I did. Feeling a little like I was imposing on him I asked how he would recommend that I proceed to find out how and why the governor decided to commute Keene's sentence. He suggested looking at Governor Wise's papers which he could deliver to me—but just one month at a time. Which month did I want? Since I knew that Keene's trial was held in November, 1856, and that he was scheduled to hang in January, 1857, I selected December, 1856, as a starting point.

The folder was delivered to my table. It contained what appeared to be hundreds of letters and notes—most of them appeals for clemency. The task of reviewing all of them in a short period of time turned out to be easier than I thought it would be. Fortunately, the governor's secretary wrote a short phrase on the back of each letter summarizing the purpose of the document. By referring to the summary I was able to move through the pile rather quickly. In one afternoon I sorted through five months of documents. References to the Keene case began to appear like nuggets of gold in a prospector's pan. There were just three documents in the December folder, but as each month was opened more documents came to light until May, 1857, when all references to Keene ceased. I found approximately twenty-eight documents which a staffer reproduced.

Now Keene's side of the story began to emerge. The first nugget was a letter from John F. M. Lowe, a past 4th ward councilman from Alexandria (1847-1849),¹⁵ to "His Excellency, Henry A. Wise" dated December 15, 1856. Lowe states that he is writing on behalf of Mrs. Kizendapher, the sister of William "Kein," and "other relatives and friends of Kein's" asking that if the governor "cannot pardon him altogether, at least to commute his punishment from hanging to that of penitentiary imprisonment for a short time." Lowe argues:

Now, his Excellency will at once perceive with a very small proportion of his usual discernment, or penetration, that it was not such a killing as to constitute Murder in the first degree the penalty of which is death; I understand no threat had been made by Kein against Hall; and none proved, no malice proven & consequently it was not a pre-meditated act; but on the contrary they had been friends for years & Kein had often befriended him, (Hall) but at a time when both were intoxicated & knew not what they did, one unfortunately killed the other.¹⁶

A second document signed by fifty-six people made essentially the same argument:

that the blow which produced death was given whilst he was labouring under intoxication sufficient to remove the idea that it was given with the deliberation necessary to constitute guilt of a degree to justify his execution.¹⁷

A third document turned out to be literally a lifesaver for Keene. It was an affidavit given to Washington L. Harper, a Justice of the Peace, by Thomas C. Dodson. Dodson was married to Nancy Keene, William's sister. He had inquired of Barnett Stewart, one of the jurors, on the evening of the day the decision was reached just how the jury could have arrived at a verdict of murder in the first degree. Stewart told Dodson that he had "done all he could to make it better with Keene" but:

the other jurors were all in favor of the verdict aforesaid & had endeavored to prevail upon him to concur, &, among other means employed, threatened him, that the court would take the jury down to Alexandria & around the Circuit, till they should agree that on the Saturday morning aforesaid, he had thought over the matter & that it seemed to be foolishness for one man to contend against eleven &, that, not being willing to leave home for such a length of time as it might take to go around the Circuit as aforesaid, having been already at court for nearly a week, he gave up, & made up his mind to agree that the jury should render the verdict aforesaid, but that he was not satisfied with the verdict when it was rendered & never would be.¹⁸

This is an amazing statement for several reasons. First, we have a juror admitting that he voted to hang a man because he had already devoted a week to the case and did not want to spend more time on the matter even though he did not think Keene was guilty of first degree murder. Secondly, this is not a sworn statement in the juror's own words. This is a sworn statement by the condemned man's brother-in-law—not exactly a disinterested party. This constitutes hearsay evidence that the juror was "threatened." It also shows that Dodson had approached a member of the jury to question his decision. By today's standards this could be considered intimidation. Apparently it was not out of line in a 19th century rural community. At any rate, the governor found the affidavit convincing enough to grant a "respite" of Keene's sentence until "the 27th of March next" so that "the proper tribunal may have an opportunity to decide upon all legal questions in the case."¹⁹

Ironically, on the day before the governor reached his decision H.W. Thomas, Keene's lawyer, wrote a letter to David Funsten, another of Keene's lawyers, passing on information that the Court of Appeals overruled Keene's

application for a new trial.²⁰ What the basis for the appeal application was, or why the court refused to hear it, I do not know. At any rate, Keene's fate was now a matter for the governor to decide.

Sometime in early March the governor was apparently visited by, or received a package of letters from, John Geisendaffer who was identified as a brother-in-law of William H. Keene. Geisendaffer (sometime spelled Keisindaffer, or Kisendaffer, or Kizendapher. I will use the spelling and the punctuation—or lack thereof—that appears on the document to which I am referring.) included a letter of introduction from R.L. Mason of "Fairfax County, near Alex." This was probably Richard Mason who is identified in the 1850 census as a twenty-one-year-old lawyer.²¹ Mason, professing to know nothing about the case, introduced Geisendaffer as a "mechanic of industry and good character" whose purpose is to "sue for mercy."²²

Geisendaffer included a second letter from Harrison Hough, son of George S. Hough, a Quaker who operated a dry goods store in Alexandria.²³ The letter introduced "Mr. John Keisindaffer, who was the person who fired 160 Guns in honor of your Election as Governor of this great & glorious old state."²⁴ This letter was also written on behalf of William Morgan, another of Keene's brothers-in-law (see genealogical chart). In fact, Geisendaffer either hand delivered or sent several letters from his friends in Alexandria—few of them knowing much about Keene or the murder. I include in this the letter from John F.M. Lowe cited above, and perhaps the petition with fifty-six signatures.

"Kisendaffer" is listed in the 1850 census for Alexandria as a "cedar cooper," age sixty, born in Germany. His wife was Sabina [Keene], age fifty; and they had a son, Fredrick, age twenty, also a cedar cooper.²⁵ As a "mechanic" in an urban area he knew a lot of people. Among them was the sheriff of Alexandria, Edward Sangster, who argued in his statement to the governor that "the friends and relatives of Keene are many of them worthy and highly respected citizens and are entitled to confidence and consideration." Sangster also implies that Hall was of questionable character:²⁶

We should not speak of the dead unless it be of meritorious acts—but rather cast the mantle of charity over their deeds and hide them from the view rather than expose them to the gaze of generations yet to come—consequently I cannot—I will not—say anything about the character and standing of the unfortunate individual who was the victim of this awful and unfortunate tragedy.²⁷

The letter was also signed by John T. Johnson, a shipsmith,²⁸ another acquaintance, no doubt, of Geisendaffer who added: "I fully concur with E. Sangster."

Finally, "Keisindaffer" wrote a letter of his own explaining what he perceived as the sequence of events leading up to the stabbing:²⁹

Fairfax Cty Va Mar 15, 1857

To his Excellency
Henry A Wise Sir

William Keene is a resident of this county. his Grandfather was an old Setler named William Keen a farmer who owned land and slaves. My Father William a resident of Fairfax, and all the family belonged to the great Democratic Party. My unfortunate distressed and truly penitent brother now in dungeon owned a grist and Saw mill and was trying to make an honest living for himself in 1855 in the month of Octo he had 7 or 8 men employed in repairing his mill. One of the men employed had a quarrel with him. Hall and Barker came to his house Hall was one of the same family and abused him in his own house Keene came there and waked him out of his bed. My brother and Barker stood talking, Hall went away to a neighbours fence when Barker overtook him. he said Keene had cut him. Barker said he did not see him nor did not know that he was hurt. the evidence given against him was conflicting. The unfortunate being has been in dungeon 15 [months]. he says if he killed Hall he did not intend to do it. he is a much distressed man and not treated like a human being, which has caused sickness, I hope your Excellency will have compassion on him and remute his sentence. I hope your Excellency will have mercy on him and save the stain of murder on his distressed friends, your mercy is most earnestly requested

Yours Most Respectfully
etc John Keisindaffer
pr W.H.Keene

This letter does not mention drinking or a fight, but it does offer an explanation as to why Hall and Barker visited Keene on that fateful Saturday. Keene had apparently quarreled with one of Hall's relatives, a man he employed to repair the mill. Hall was going to confront Keene about his actions. The sentence which states that "Keene came there and waked him out of his bed" must be a mistake. The author probably intended to write "Hall came there and waked him out of his bed." It is also interesting to note that the letter was written in Fairfax County—where the jail or "dungeon" was located. Since Geisendaffer lived in Alexandria I assume that he wrote this letter in the presence of, or shortly after visiting, Keene.

Five or more days before Geisendaffer wrote the above letter, perhaps after he visited the governor and made a personal appeal as is implied by the introductory nature of the letters from Lowe, Mason and Hough, the

governor was moved to inquire of his secretary what Keene's status was. On the back of an envelope he wrote.³⁰

Has this
Man's sentence
been sent?—Can
it be commuted
—into what?

H.A.W.

His secretary responded:

In the case of Wm Keene, the record shows he was sentenced by the Circuit Court of Fairfax to be hung, for murder in the first degree, on the 30th day of Jany last. Upon affidavit by one of the Jurors that he was induced to concur in the verdict only because he believed he was to be carried round the Judicial Circuit, the Governor heretofore granted a reprieve to enable the party to apply for a writ of error to obtain a new trial. The Reprieve postponed the execution of the sentence until the 27th of March, (the present month).

The Constitution authorizes the Governor to commute capital punishment. The law of 1852 authorizes him to order the prisoner to be confined in the Penitentiary indefinitely.

On the back of the note the governor wrote:

Remind me
of this case
again before
the 27th inst.

H.A. Wise

March 10th

Under that is scrawled:

March 20
Reprieved until
1st Friday in May

It should be noted that the secretary's advice to the governor that the "affidavit by one of the Jurors that he was induced to concur in the verdict" was inaccurate. The affidavit was from Thomas C. Dodson, Keene's brother-in-law, quoted above—not from the juror Stewart. This reaffirms that the basis for the governor's first postponement of Keene's execution was the assumption that the juror's experience was accurately reported by a party

who had an interest in the outcome. Apparently, the Appeals Court did not find the evidence for a writ of error, whatever that evidence may have been, nearly so persuasive.

Between March 10th and March 20th the governor received Geisendaffer's letter quoted above but also two letters from Keene's lawyers: one from David Funsten and W.T. Edwards and another from H.W. Thomas. The letter from Funsten and Edwards is an appeal for clemency. They state that Hall and Barker went to Keene's house "under the pretense of seeing one Maria Hall; that the deceased and Keene were not on friendly terms, and there had been no friendly intercourse between them for years." Further, "that Keene was drunk and had been in that condition for several days." The writers were satisfied "that Hall and Barker knew at the time they went to Keene's house, that Maria Hall was not there, and I therefore conclude that the pretense of seeking her was a false one." The testimony of Hall and Barker was "suspicious." They regarded Barker's testimony that he turned back with Keene when offered whiskey even though his friend had been stabbed "very remarkable." Hall and Barker did not make "fair, full and thoughtful" statements concerning the purpose of their visit. There is too much "doubt hanging over the transaction to justify the extreme verdict," therefore the "case is a proper one for the interposition of executive clemency."³¹

H.W. Thomas' letter was written to David Funsten examining the merits of Funsten's application for clemency and was probably included by Funsten in the same envelope. Thomas argues that the killing was not "deliberate and premeditated." He claims that the "evidence shows" that when Hall and Barker went to Keene's house they "found him drunk and excited." He believes a "controversy ensued" between them and that one blow was struck "upon the heat of the moment" and "I do not think that under the circumstances he should receive the same punishment as the deliberate assassin."³²

The governor was persuaded to postpone the sentence again. On the back of an envelope bearing a canceled stamp and the name "David Funsten, Esq, Alexandria, Va" is scrawled in a heavy hand:

Let the prisoner in this case be respiteed until the 1st friday in May, that I may have time to consider the whole evidence where an abstract thereof shall be prepared by the Comths atty who prosecuted in the Case, as well as by the Counsel of the prisoner.

H.A. Wise

March 19th 1857

Under that note is written another:

Apl. 23rd 1857
Write to Comths
Atty & prisoners
Counsel for
abstract of testimony
Henry A. Wise³³

A more formal notice of “respite” was sent to Walter Powell, Sheriff of Fairfax County, on March 20. Powell acknowledged receipt on March 22nd, five days before Keene was to hang.³⁴

Here is the proof that Governor Wise did order the Secretary of the Commonwealth twice to write to the Commonwealth’s Attorney and to the prisoner’s counsel to obtain an “abstract of the evidence.” The governor in his letter to William Dulany, published in the January 8, 1858, *Alexandria Gazette* stated he had done so. Apparently Dulany never responded to the governor’s request. Thus he did not try to influence the governor’s decision. While Dulany could not be censured by Hall’s friends for contributing to the governor’s final decision to commute Keene’s sentence, he certainly could be criticized for not attempting to influence that decision. Perhaps he lost interest in the case or he no longer felt that it was a case of first degree murder.

April was the last folder in the Wise papers to render documents about the Keene case. Several of them should be quoted in their entirety. The first is a statement from Barnett Stewart, the juror, in his own words in an affidavit before a Justice of the Peace:

Virginia
County of Alexandria to wit

This 4th day of April 1857, Barnett Stewart personally appeared before the undersigned a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid & being duly sworn, sayeth: that he was one of the jurors in the trial of William H. Keene, who was convicted of murder in the first degree in the Circuit Court of Fairfax County at the last November term thereof: that a man named Barker was the principal witness examined against said Keene on said trial & was the only one present besides Keene & Hall at the time that the latter was killed: that said Stewart regarded the testimony of said Barker as inconsistent on its face & it was altogether unsatisfactory to him, but that the said witness was not impeached & that this latter fact was used with effect to destroy the force of said inconsistency in the mind of said Stewart: that on the retirement of the jury the said Stewart refused for a length of time to unite in the verdict which was subsequently rendered but that the other jurors

urged that the case must be tried according to the testimony & that Barker's testimony was unimpeached, whatever said Stewart might think of it's improbability: that said Stewart at last yielded to the said suggestions of the jurors, not however until a further influence was brought to bear namely, that if the verdict was wrong there were other chances, such as a new trial & the Executive pardon: that said Stewart reluctantly agreed to join in the verdict rendered under the impression that unless Barkers testimony had been contradicted or he had been impeached as a witness that it was said Stewarts duty to take such testimony as true whatever said Stewarts opinion or doubt might be of the truth of the same, derived from other sources: & that said Stewart, without intending in any degree to reflect on the character of the jurors but referring to the existence of a strong popular feeling at that time existing, states as his belief, that the minds of the jurors were more or less under excitement caused by some two or three cases of homicide that had been committed in the neighborhood a short time before & that the jury were perhaps over ready to visit any case that might arise with the severest penalty of the law, & that the result would have been different with Keene but for such previous offences.

And the said Stewart desires it to be further certified that he recommends the said Keene to the clemency of the Executor & hopes that the punishment may be commuted to what he regarded as proper, namely, the penalty for murder in the second degree, believing that the end of justice will so, best be attained.³⁵

John Summers J.P.

This certainly firmly establishes the fact that Stewart was having second thoughts about Keene's degree of guilt. However, he still seems to be rationalizing his role in the jury process. He made it easier to absolve himself of guilt by choosing to believe that a wrong decision would be corrected down the line by a new trial or executive review. His conscience (or social pressure?) had now forced him to take a stand in contrast to the one he took as a juror and to participate in the correction process.

Another juror having second thoughts was Richard K. Lee. Lee served on the coroner's jury that met in the Sutherland home to investigate the cause of Hall's death. Lee appeared before Alexandria Justice of the Peace W.J. Harper on 22 April 1857. Harper states that:³⁶

[Lee] is well acquainted with John Barker the principal witness on the trial of said Keene at the inquest aforesaid; & that he did not believe said Barker's testimony before said coroner & that he would place no confidence in any thing said Barker would state on oath in any case when he would be interested & connected as he was with that Hall family.³⁷

Two days before Lee made his affidavit another letter was written to the governor calling into question the testimony of John W. Barker from his own brother Quenton. Quenton Barker was a forty-eight-year-old shop-keeper in Alexandria according to the 1850 census.^{38 39} He is married to Lucretia Keene, the sister of William H.—a fact that he does not mention in his letter⁴⁰ (see the Keene genealogy in the appendixes); nor does he mention his relationship to John W. Barker. Quenton states that he grew up in the neighborhood and is very critical of “This tribe of Halls” who are no better than “wild indians” who consider education a disgrace and “religion is a thing almost unknown among them.” He describes Mariah Hall as “one of the tribe” who hung around Keene’s Mill “day & nights” and “would get some person to make charges and get some of her connexion to go after K. to force money out of him.”

Quenton Barker’s letter further stated that he met John W. Barker in Alexandria shortly after the incident and had been told by him “positively that Keene did not cut Hall” and that he “saw no knife used by anyone.” In fact,

Hall went off for home and he [John W. Barker] went back to the house with K. to get some whiskey, remained sometime than started for home going by one of the neighbors he heard Hall was hurt. He B. told this same tale to Mr. James C. Denty, his brother in law, and to others. Denty & myself who was summoned in the case stated the same. but Barker told quite a different story in court. now it is well known that Barker is a poor inebrate and for years has been going with these creatures and finally has married one of that tribe and stays among them and seldom goes among his relations but makes himself a tool for them and writes for them.

Here are three people—Stewart, Lee and Quenton Barker—who did not trust the word of the only witness, John W. Barker. Did Keene’s lawyers attempt to attack Barker’s credibility at the trial? Two of his lawyers, Funsten and Edwards, in their appeal to the governor for clemency state that Barker’s testimony was “suspicious.” Quenton Barker stated that he and Denty personally heard a very different description of events from Barker himself and “stated the same” when they were summoned in the case. Yet Barnett Stewart, the juror, claims that Barker’s court testimony was “unimpeached,” and for that reason he had to go along with the rest of the jury. What really went on in that courtroom in November 1856 we will probably never know.

Apparently, Geisendaffer’s efforts to bombard the chief executive with paper missives continued. On April 20 Daniel Francis Sprigg wrote on “be-

half of a parishioner of mine whose brother, Wm H Keene, is now in jail in Fairfax co. under sentence of death for murder.”⁴¹ Sprigg identifies himself as the editor of the “Southern Churchman,” and offers two reasons to save Keene’s life. First, “testimony will be placed before you in a few days, which I think will lead your Excellency to the opinion, that the homicide, was not a clear case of murder in the first degree.” Secondly, “the poor wretch, is but a few degrees removed from heathenism, & is ill prepared to meet death.”

Seven days later a backup letter was sent from Alexandria by Henry A. Wise, Jr. to his father, the governor, telling him that a Reverend Mr. Sprigg will be sending him “evidence” which will “prove” that “some man” who was not known to Henry Junior was not guilty of murder in the first degree.⁴²

Geisendaffer wrote his last letter to the governor on April 25. He begged the governor to spare the life of W. H. Keene from an “ignominious death” which will bring disgrace upon the family, especially his sister Sabina (Geisendaffer’s wife) “who is the wife of one of our most industrious citizens, not only at his trade but in the cause of democracy.”⁴³

The last letter that I found in the April file was from William H. Keene. It was his final appeal, written on April 24th in his own words, and I will cite it in its entirety:⁴⁴

To your Excellency Henry A. Wise Governer of Va hoping your oner will interfar in my exacution and commut my awfull doom and will doo me Justiss it iss all I pray for is eaueal Justiss on this earth between man and man and I doo earnestlay appeal unto you for to correct the in Justiss don unto me and in the naim of god it is my onelay prayer and I will give you a full statment of my condishion and factes so far as they have ever occerd unto me. in 1855 in october I had severl hand imploid in bilding my mill and amongst the rest I had a man working for me by the naim of Hall well all handes got on a sprey and I discharged all handes untill they got sober & at the same time I had a bone fel on my left hand which I was deranged with and noed not at times what was don for I had on fryday drink a larg quanty of speirtes and on Satterday I was crasey in my bed and all alone and about too or three o clock Hall and barker came to my house, and bitterlay approached me I had done rong in driving Weslay hall away from my house I beged them to let me alone I was sike and did not wont any fuss with them I had no dealing with them and I was all alone wood thay leave my house as I thot hard of being curst in my house. Well thay both got up and went out the dore and I found they were drunke or apperd so well I laid still on my bed and in a fu minites

they both com to the dore and cold to each other and said less go in agin and take him bed and all out we have got him now from that I jupt up off my bed and met them both at the dore and a scuffell insued and I found my self out in the yard contending aginest both of them with my one hand and at last I got loos from them and Hall went off and barker staid som half ouer afterwards and when I com to my self I found I was dreadfullay beaten and Brueasd up and if I cut Hall I dont no it for it wernt my intenshun nor my desire to kill him nor no one else for after I got loos from them Hall never said he was hurt But went off out of sight and left Barker Standing in my yard, and I Had hard worke to get Barker to leav my primissess as the houes they cam from wernt more then a mile of and I had to beg barker to meat Hall and not com bake to my houes aney more and this iss all that has ever accurd unto me after Being in prisn now hard upon too yers and it has bin my daylay study with all the exershun I cood use to Bring to mind what had hapend and if it had ever occurd unto me other wies I wood of said so and it was six monthes befor I cood beleav the Reality but you cood onely no my condishun and Juge for your Self I am utterlay deprived of all power in ther coming unto my houes in thee maner thay did and take all the advantige to deprive me of my lief as well as my property when I was all alone and in a helpless condishion on my sik bed and then to lay in prisn and siffer in cold and in irones and in darkness in a cloes sell for what I never thot of dooing in all my life, and I ernistlay doo ask your oner and will ever pray for you to commute my punishment and at your hands I commit my complaint and my distress as a pore unfortunat man for I have once sufferd deth her in this dungen and o how hard it iss to suffer duble deth without noing what I am to dy fore. in the naim of god I Send this unto you a praying for aeql Justiss to be don her on erth betwen man and man I ascribe myself to be your unfortutnat prisener under the aufull setnence of deth. Apr 24 1857

W.H. Keene

in fairfax County dungen, va.

NB it is hard for me to suffer for other peopels sines nor if thay was to hang half in the conty thay cant make me atone for the gilt of others) tho I have never had extended unto me the oner of ever consulting my god for her in this Jail ther is onely 2 Roomes and both is dungen and in my sell is all wayes full a men under and aufull condishion as I am they shood I thinke ot to Be alone and stid of that ther is no fealing of humanity shone thay thinke a man is like beast thay dont eaven thinke a man has a sole to be saved in the mides of all my distress ther is not a day that I can have a peacefull one to myself and if it be so that I am

killed I am then plunged into eternity head formost for in the maner I am [held] her my ease is morne full and how aufull is it to think on that I shall Be plunged in hell By the hands of the peopel and after all my misray her on erth to not have that privilegde that was ordaind to man by the deth of our saver Jesus crist who died for siners and I hope and trust in your oner you will looke Seariss on me and not let my sole and boday Both perish under you du considerashun in behalft of a por suffer in my aufull condishon

W.H. Keene

now in farfax dungen
and in darness
To you oner govner H.A. Wiez of Va

Now it was time for the governor to decide. Keene's punishment had been postponed twice. It was to be carried out on the first Friday in May—approximately two weeks from the date of Keene's letter. The case against Keene hung on the trial testimony of John W. Barker. In the past month that testimony has been questioned by two jurors and his brother. At the same time Keene's account does not ring true either. Yes, there was a fight and yes, everyone was drunk; but Keene who had to fight with one hand had no memory of stabbing Hall. And if we are to believe Quenton Barker, Hall must have been knifed after he left Keene's yard. That does not seem likely.

The fact to which both John W. Barker and Keene agree is that Barker lingered in Keene's yard after there was a serious fight between the three men. This is hardly the act of a rational man concerned with the condition of his friend. But it does lend credence to the argument that these were three very drunk, irrational men who simply did not know what they were doing.

On the back of an envelope postmarked "Fairfax, 24 April" the governor wrote:⁴⁵

Let this man,s
punishment be
commuted to ten
years confinement
in the penitentiary

Henry A. Wise
Apl. 25th 1857

Some months after I waded through the governor's papers in Richmond, when I was searching for what could possibly have happened to Keene in prison, I had a conversation with Paul W. Keve, author of *The*

*History of Corrections in Virginia.*⁴⁶ He called my attention to the fact that Virginia governors usually submitted statements concerning their decisions regarding pardons to the *Journal of the House of Delegates* which is published at the end of every session—a document the Richmond archivists failed to call to my attention. When I had an occasion to visit the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, I found the *Journal* for the session of 1857-1858; sure enough, I found Governor Wise's explanation of his decision in the documents section of the book:⁴⁷

29. I reprieved William H. Keene, who was condemned to be hung by the circuit court of the county of Fairfax on the 4th Friday of January of the present year, for the crime of murder—first, on the 17th of January until the 27th of March last, and afterwards, on the 20th of March until 1st Friday in May, to afford time to consider the whole evidence, when an abstract thereof should be prepared by the attorney who prosecuted, and by the counsel of the prisoner.

Subsequently, on the 25th of April, I commuted the punishment of death, to which this prisoner was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in the penitentiary, for the reason that the homicide was committed under circumstances which repel the idea of willful determination and premeditation; that the prisoner was roused from his bed by the deceased and another, while he was in a state of intoxication, or laboring under its effects, and that the blow which caused death was inflicted in a sudden scuffle, under this influence, and without intention to kill.

I think the governor made the right decision, but I am struck by the arbitrariness of the system. From December, 1856, until April, 1857, the governor was inundated with letters and petitions from the prisoner's relatives and friends of his relatives. Not a single letter came from the prosecuting attorney or from the Halls. The governor acted on Dodson's affidavit in postponing sentence the first time; and in the end he accepted Keene's perspective on how things happened. He scribbled his decisions on the backs of envelopes—an action that in itself symbolizes the haste and arbitrariness of a harassed executive. It appears that whoever had the governor's ear won.

Why didn't Keene carry the day in court? Did he ever make a statement in his own defense? Did his lawyers ever attack Barker's credibility? Was Keene's case weakened because in Quenton Barker's words: "Keenes witnesses had been at Court two days and was most all drunk and some falling down in the court house and was not able to give evidence to what

they knew ...”?⁴⁸ Perhaps the juror Barnett Stewart’s explanation focuses on another contributing factor:⁴⁹

the jurors were more or less under excitement caused by some two or three cases of homicide that had been committed in the neighborhood a short time before & that the jury were perhaps overready to visit any case that might arise with the severest penalty of the law, ...

I still had a lot of unanswered questions—not just about the trial and the process of sentencing—but also about the mill and what finally happened to William H. Keene. The answer to what happened to the mill required research in the Fairfax Circuit Court Archives. With the help of archivist Connie Ring, threads of information were teased out of deeds, wills, and court records. A larger picture of the Keene family and details about the mill began to emerge.

My search for the date of origin of Keene’s Mill provides a good lesson in how easy it is to misread handwritten primary sources, and how error can become amplified. An acquaintance sent me a reference in a secondary source to a request made by the Rev. Lee Massey of Pohick church in 1769 to the Fairfax County Court (the governing body of the county until 1870) asking the court to order a “road be opened from the church to the ox road at Keene’s mill.”⁵⁰ When I found the source cited,⁵¹ I entered the following direct quotation into my notes : “on the motion of Rev. Mr. Lee Massey it is ordered that the road from Pohic Church to the ox road at Keen’s mill be cleared ...” This was to the best of my knowledge the first recorded reference to Keene’s mill, and it meant that the mill had to have come into existence in or before 1769. Since there is no mill shown at the known location of the mill on James Keene’s property cited in Beth Mitchell’s map identifying Fairfax County property holders in 1760,⁵² the easy conclusion is that the mill had to have been built between 1760 and 1769.

That is what I stated in the first draft of this paper. It was also included in the text of a historic marker I had submitted to the Fairfax County History Commission and eventually to the state to be placed near the site. Subsequently, while researching another topic I returned to the court order book of 1768-1770 and reread what was recorded as Massey’s request. I was shocked at what I found. He did indeed request that a road be cleared, but not to “Keen’s mill.” He wanted it to go to “Keen’s Hill.” The distinction between the handwritten “H” and “m” was hard to discern, but I had read it as an “m” because I had wanted it to be that. A second entry on the same subject in the court order book of 1770 also clearly refers to “Keen’s Hill.”⁵³ Massey may have said “mill” and the court clerk recorded it as

“Hill;” or when it was transcribed from notes into the court order book it might have been miscopied—just as I had done in reverse. Or he might have said exactly what was recorded. It is impossible to know. I have never seen any other reference to “Keen’s Hill;” but for the want of a letter my whole thesis regarding the date of origin had to be rewritten.

In December 1799 an agreement⁵⁴ was drawn up between James (II) and William Keene, whose properties occupied the west side of Pohick Creek for about one or two miles, and William Barker whose land occupied an equal distance on the east side of the creek. For \$500 William Barker agreed to permit James Keene to raise a dam on the Pohick to allow water to be conveyed to his saw mill. In return Keene had to build an abutment on Barker’s property running parallel to the creek starting “from the East side of the present upper mill dam” to prevent flooding below the dam; and to allow Barker to build two watergates below the dam stretching across to William Keene’s land.

This implies that there already was a mill dam in place, presumably servicing a mill. The agreement was recorded in January 1800. Therefore, the documentary evidence would lead us to conclude that, while no mill existed on James Keene’s property in 1760, one probably did exist there by 1800.

While the documents provide clues, archeological evidence exists on the mill site which is located on the north side of Old Keene Mill Road just after the road crosses Pohick Creek (see site diagram). Two millraces lay in silence there. One race runs parallel to the creek on the west side and was at one time fed by the Pohick. The other one runs parallel to the road and at right angles to the lower race and the creek. This one was fed by diverting a small branch which empties into the Pohick above the mill site. The deep cut in this race just before the mill tail suggests an overshot waterwheel in contrast to the lower race which probably turned an undershot wheel moved by current. I suspect that the overshot race was built later than the lower race to get the additional power that an overshot design harnessing the water’s weight would provide.

The mill stayed in the Keene family until the death of James (III) in 1836 when Silas Burke, James’ administrator, sold it to Presley Barker and Archibald Hall in 1838 (see chain of title for Keene’s Mill).⁵⁵ Hall died that same year so Barker sold the mill and approximately four acres to William and John Sutherland who had married two of Archibald’s daughters.⁵⁶ On a receipt written to cover part of this transaction Barker referred to “the saw-mill & grist-mill.”⁵⁷ This implies two separate structures; and that also fits



The author at the junction of the mill tail and the lower millrace. Photograph by Valerie Townes December 7, 1994.

with the two millraces. However, no document has come to my attention clearly showing or stating that there were two mill structures on the property.

William H. Keene, the last of his father's children, acquired the mill property in April, 1849,⁵⁸ just one month after his father, William (IV), passed away. He paid the Sutherlands \$800, a sum he probably felt secure investing since he was named executor of William's estate and heir, after the death of Jane—his stepmother—to "all my estate both real and personal not herein otherwise disposed of".⁵⁹ An inventory of William's property lists twenty-two slaves.⁶⁰ Nine of those slaves were given to William H.'s siblings and one was sold to pay another brother \$500 cash; but that still left twelve to be sold or rented.

William H. probably felt comfortable running a mill. He might have even worked there as a young man. His grandfather had an interest in the mill—he cosigned the 1799 agreement made with William Barker to expand the mill pond. His granduncle James (II) built it and ran it until his death in 1833. William H. Keene was thirty-four years old when he bought the mill. Running a local saw and grist mill would make him a respected and essential member of the community. This may have been his plan, but fate held a very different destiny for him.

Shortly after his father's death five of William H.'s seven siblings sued to have their father's will set aside on the grounds that William H. had unduly influenced him.⁶¹ Four of the five girls—Jane Morgan, Nancy Dodson, Lucretia Barker, and Sabina Geisendaffer—had just received two slaves each; Susan Rowley was to get \$50, and Thompson Keene was to receive \$500. Apparently they were not satisfied and the court agreed. The will was set aside and annulled in 1852 and George Burke was appointed administrator of William (IV)'s estate.

In 1853 William H. tried to recoup something by suing George Burke for \$750 which he claimed the estate owed him for services rendered to his father from 1844 through 1848 at a rate of \$150 per year.⁶² Six witnesses testified on William's behalf. All of them agreed that William H. lived with William (IV) and handled his father's affairs—according to one witness since 1840. While there was some cultivation on the farm the renting of slaves seems to have been a major source of income. Sometimes payment for slave services was made in kind: fish, meal, bacon, etc. At least two witnesses stated that the farm was "very poor." Three witnesses agreed in the words of T.J. Suddath that "William had done more for him [William H.'s father] than any of his children," and:

that since he had had the management he had kept them in provision which was not the case before & that he thought he ought to do a little more for Wm than any of his children that he ought to be paid for his services.

Lawrence R. Taylor, George Burke's attorney, drew a different picture. He accused William H. of hiring out the slaves and pocketing the money to the tune of \$3,000 from 1844 though 1848. Whether he was able to prove that charge is unclear. The case was submitted to arbitration in November 1855—two years after it was instituted—and finally resolved in April 1856. The decision by Thomas J. Murray was that the statute of limitations applied for all the years of service except 1848. Therefore, William H. Keene was awarded \$150 three years after he brought suit against his father's estate for \$750. By this time he was in jail for murder of Lewis Q. Hall.

On October 30, 1855, the day after Hall died, Keene turned over all of his property in trust to Henry W. Thomas, a Fairfax attorney.⁶³ Thomas was given the power to sell the mill property and "the real and personal estate of which William Keene the father of the said William H. died possessed or entitled, also all his interest in the dower now held by Jane Keene, widow of said William ..." to pay off Keene's personal debts and his anticipated legal debts. The document also established a sequence of people who would

receive any proceeds left from the sale of his estate should he die in jail. First in line was Jane Keene, his eighty-one-year-old stepmother who lived with him. If she should die Keene's estate would go to Maria Hall who also apparently lived with him. Third in line was Richard Keene, son of Addison Keene—William's cousin (see family genealogy). Jane Keene did die in November,⁶⁴ and William went to jail that same month.⁶⁵

In the following month Henry W. Thomas initiated suit in the name of William against the other heirs of Jane's dower—Jane Morgan, John and Sabina Geisendaffer, Quenton and Lucretia Barker, to force them to agree to sell the nine slaves and divide the proceeds. The slaves were sold in January, 1856, for \$6787 and the money was divided.⁶⁶

The mill property was put up for sale in July, 1857. It was purchased by George Chichester, the highest bidder, for \$480.⁶⁷ Chichester died in 1858 and the property probably went through his wife to his son, John H. Chichester, without a deed. John H. Chichester in turn sold the land "containing about five acres more or less" for \$300 to Wilmer and Montgomery Corse in January, 1869.⁶⁸ The fact that the property lost value and that only land is mentioned in the deed would seem to indicate that no mill structures were still standing on the site by 1869.

From this time until 1958 the ownership of the mill property has been lost. Apparently the five acres were abandoned and at some point quietly incorporated into the land of Fred W. and Gladys L. McLaughlin. They sold a portion of the land in 1958,⁶⁹ and it changed hands two more times until it was acquired by Presley Company, a land developer, in 1974. In order to continue selling the land the cloud on its title had to be removed. This was done by court action in c.1985.⁷⁰

In 1971 hurricane Agnes knocked out the small bridge which carried Old Keene Mill Road, then just two lanes, over Pohick Creek. It was replaced, but the road was too narrow to carry the increased traffic brought about by new housing developments. The accident rate was increasing and the winter snows made passage precarious. The bridge was raised, and the road straightened and widened to four lanes in 1979. The section that once passed by the mill was abandoned and ultimately turned over to two private families whose homes front on the new Old Keene Mill Road. The section between the old road and the Shannon Station Townhouse community, where the millraces are located, belong to the Fairfax County Park Authority. People driving west across the Pohick Creek can glimpse on their right a ribbon of stagnant water and rotting leaves in the lower millrace. The rest remains buried under a canopy of forest and the detritus of time.

William H. Keene was forty-seven years old when he entered the Virginia State Prison in Richmond. In his letter of appeal to the governor Keene had described the Fairfax jail as a dungeon. The prison he entered in 1857 actually had dungeons built into it to hold men in solitary confinement as mandated by state law in the belief that three months of such confinement just prior to release would contribute to rehabilitation. That law had been abandoned by 1838.⁷¹ The prison was designed by Benjamin Latrobe and completed in 1800. Paul Keve, a scholar who has studied the evolution of the Virginia prison system, offers this description:

Artistically the building was a gem. As a place to contain, employ, and control two hundred prisoners, however, it was sadly deficient. It could be categorically called a failure unless the judgment would seem to be disputed by the fact that the building survived successive fires and remodelings to give service for a century and a quarter. There is no dispute that throughout the nineteenth century Virginia could boast the possession of one of the most elegantly designed prisons in the country while at the same time suffering with one of the least utilitarian and least humane of America's prison buildings.⁷²

Keve adds:

Latrobe's single prison building housed its inmates in cells, many of which were large enough to hold several beds; but with no provision for heating the building, the inmates suffered considerably in the winter. The heavy, windowless, solid oak doors to the cells served adequately for security purposes except for the severe defect of defeating supervision. With two or more inmates in most cells, any sort of activity could be going on within, and there was no way that any guard could observe or know about it. Ventilation was poor, there was no plumbing, and the heavy stone walls and wooden floors were typically damp with condensation. The odors of packed-in bodies and open toilet buckets were pervasive. Yet it was in these rooms that the inmates had to eat, for there was no dining room.⁷³

Into this place William H. Keene disappeared. All prison records were lost during the Civil War. One can only conjecture as to what happened to him. He could have died in prison—the death rate was high.⁷⁴ If that happened his body could have been sent to the morgue at the Medical College of Virginia—one supposes they were always looking for cadavers.⁷⁵ He could have been pardoned during the war to serve in the Virginia military.⁷⁶ However, indexes of Confederate military records at the National Archives show no William H. Keene. Other Keens, Keans or Keins do not check out. He could have escaped. On April 3, 1865, a day after the fall of Petersburg

to the Union forces, Richmond was set afire and abandoned. Two hundred eighty-seven prisoners walked out of the prison after looting it before Union forces entered the city. Some were recaptured.⁷⁷ Finally, Keene could have served his time and been released in 1867, then stayed away from Fairfax County. His name cannot be located in the 1870 census. What happened to William H. Keene is not in any written record that I have found.

I started this search looking for a mill and I found a man. Along the way I discovered some things about his property, his slaves, his neighbors, his relatives, the courts in Fairfax County and justice in 19th century Virginia. I learned how widely used and destructive whiskey was in antebellum Fairfax County. I found family cemeteries. I found descendants of the Hall family still living in the area, and sometimes family members in search of their past found me. Few descendants knew anything about the murder. In my search for William H. Keene I found that Springfield did have a history—a history that occurred on many levels, including that of a small farmer who did not seem to have much control over the direction of his life.

But the absolute events in any of our lives cannot be used to define our history in any meaningful way if not recorded—or if recorded, are not found. Historic research is a heavy responsibility since the record of our past is our only claim to immortality—even the life story of a small farmer is revealing and significant.

Notes

FCOB = Fairfax Court Order Books

FCFF = Fairfax Chancery Final File

FDB = Fairfax Deed Book

FWB = Fairfax Will Book

HAWP = Henry A. Wise Papers

¹ *Daingerfield et.al. v. Daingerfield Heirs*, 1870, Arlington Court Archives, shows a plat of Springfield Farm and the location of the RR station.

² Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak ... The Patents and Northern Neck Grants of Fairfax County, Virginia*, Office of Comprehensive Planning, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1979.

³ Patricia Hickin, "1840-1870," in Nan Netherton, et.al., *Fairfax County, Virginia, A History*, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County, Virginia, 197, p. 279.

⁴ Fairfax Court Order Book (from now on abbreviated as FCOB) 1852:202, Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

⁵ Ibid. 1852:213.

⁶ *Inquests 1837-1902*, Part II; Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

⁷ Ibid. (I will quote the spelling and punctuation—or lack thereof—as it appears in each document cited.)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Fairfax County, Virginia*, 127.

¹⁰ Ibid., 165.

¹¹ In the previous year another inquest was held in the same place over the body of John Sutherland. They found he “came to his death by excessive drinking and expired.” See “*Inquest Into the Death of John Sutherland*,” *Inquests, 1837-1902*, Pt. 1, Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

¹² *Seventh Census, Alexandria*, op.cit:371.

¹³ FCOB 1852:202.

¹⁴ *Obituary Notices From The Alexandria Gazette—1784-1915*, Alexandria Library Staff, Heritage Books, Bowie, MD, 1987.

¹⁵ T. Michael Miller, *Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom, 1749-1992*, Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, MD, 1992:25.

¹⁶ Jno. F.M. Lowe to “His Excellency Henry A. Wise,” December 15, 1856, Henry A. Wise Papers (from hereon designated HAWP), Virginia State Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁷ Petition to “His Excellency Henry A. Wise,” No Date, HAWP.

¹⁸ Affidavit by Thomas C. Dodson, December 26, 1856, HAWP.

¹⁹ Henry A. Wise to “the Staff of Fairfax Co or the Clerk for the Staff,” January 16, 1857, HAWP.

²⁰ H.W. Thomas to David Funsten, January 15, 1857, HAWP.

²¹ *Seventh Census, Alexandria*, op.cit:364.

²² R.L. Mason to “His Excellency Gov. Wise,” February 12, 1857, HAWP.

²³ William W. Henshaw, *Encyclopedia of Quaker Genealogy*, V.6, Virginia, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD, 1973. Harrison Hough was “discharged” from the Quaker meeting in 1841 for “managing a dance hall.”

²⁴ Harrison Hough to “His Excellency Henry A. Wise,” March 2, 1857, HAWP.

²⁵ *Seventh Census, Alexandria*, op. cit:359.

²⁶ Sangster was himself of questionable character. Two years after he wrote this letter to the governor he was sued by twelve of his friends who had put up the security money for his bond as sheriff. It seems that they did not turn in Alexandria’s revenues (taxes) to the state government. His bond holders had to put up the money then proceed against Sangster in court to get some portion of their money back by selling off his land. See *Grigsby, etc. v. Sangster*, FCFF#40h (1859).

²⁷ E. Sangster to “His Excellency Henry A. Wise,” February 14, 1857, HAWP.

²⁸ *Seventh Census, Alexandria*, op.cit:324.

²⁹ John Keisindaffer to Henry A. Wise, March 15, 1857, HAWP.

³⁰ Note and envelope scrap found in March, 1857, collection, HAWP.

³¹ W.T. Edwards and David Funsten, Esq. to Henry A. Wise, March 17, 1857, HAWP.

³² H.W. Thomas to David Funsten, Esq., March 17, 1857, HAWP.

³³ Note found in March folder of HAWP.

³⁴ Walter Powell, Sheriff, to Henry A. Wise, March 22, 1857, HAWP.

³⁵ Affidavit by Barnett Stewart, April 4, 1857, HAWP.

³⁶ Affidavit by Richard K. Lee made to W.J. Harper, April 22, 1857, HAWP.

³⁷ Barker was married to Amanda Hall, who was Lewis Q. Hall's sister (see FWB A2:298).

³⁸ *Seventh Census, Alexandria*, op.cit:359.

³⁹ The relationship between Quenton Barker and John W. Barker as sons of Leonard and Anna Barker is established in FCFF#52p *Johnson & Company v. Barker*, 1832.

⁴⁰ Quenton Barker to "Hon. Henry A. Wise," April 20, 1857, HAWP.

⁴¹ Daniel Francis Sprigg to "Honorable Henry A. Wise," April 20, 1857, HAWP.

⁴² Henry A. Wise, Jr. to Governor Henry A. Wise, Sr., April 27, 1857, HAWP.

⁴³ John Geisendaffer to "His Excellency Henry A. Wise," April 25, 1857, HAWP.

⁴⁴ W.H. Keene to "Your Excellency Henry A. Wise Governor of Va.," April 24, 1857, HAWP.

⁴⁵ Note on envelope scrap found in April, 1857, collection of HAWP.

⁴⁶ Paul W. Keve, *The History of Corrections in Virginia*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 1986.

⁴⁷ *Journal of the House of Delegates of The State of Virginia*, for the Session of 1857-58, Richmond, William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1857:clxxvi - clxxvii.

⁴⁸ Quenton Barker, op.cit.

⁴⁹ Stewart, op.cit.

⁵⁰ Hollin Hill Bulletin, Winter, 1965.

⁵¹ FCOB 1768-1770:142.

⁵² Beth Mitchell, *Fairfax County, Virginia in 1760; An Interpretive Historical Map*, Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1987:96-97.

⁵³ FCOB 1770:34.

⁵⁴ FDB B2: 396-398.

⁵⁵ FDB D3: 509.

⁵⁶ FDB D3: 539.

⁵⁷ FCFF#44R *Sutherland v. Hall*, 1838.

⁵⁸ FDB O3:80.

⁵⁹ FWB V:320-321.

⁶⁰ FWB W:123.

⁶¹ FCFF#57R, *Thompson Keene et. al. v. William Keene*, 1849.

⁶² *William H. Keene v. George Burke*, Term Papers, Box 12, June 1856, Pt.1, Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

⁶³ FDB X#:15.

⁶⁴ FCFF#98f, *William H. Keene et. al. v. Jane Morgan et. al.*, 1855.

⁶⁵ *Inquests 1837-1902*, Pt.II, Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

⁶⁶ FCFF#98f, op.cit.

⁶⁷ FDB Z3:206-209.

⁶⁸ FDB L4:482.

⁶⁹ FDB 1670:49.

⁷⁰ Chancery #78834, *Presley Company East, Inc. v. Unknown Parties*; FDB 6268:1793.

⁷¹ Keve, op.cit:43.

⁷² Ibid:25.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid:59.

⁷⁵ Ibid:94.

⁷⁶ Ibid:44.

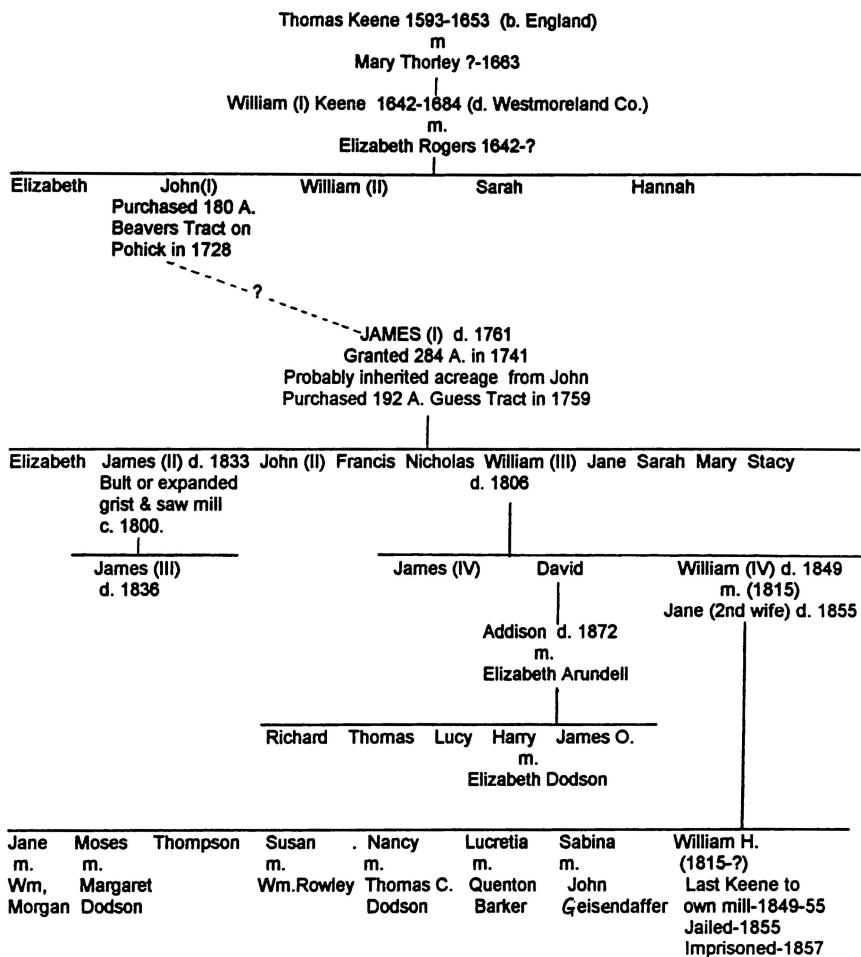
⁷⁷ Ibid:65-67.

Appendices

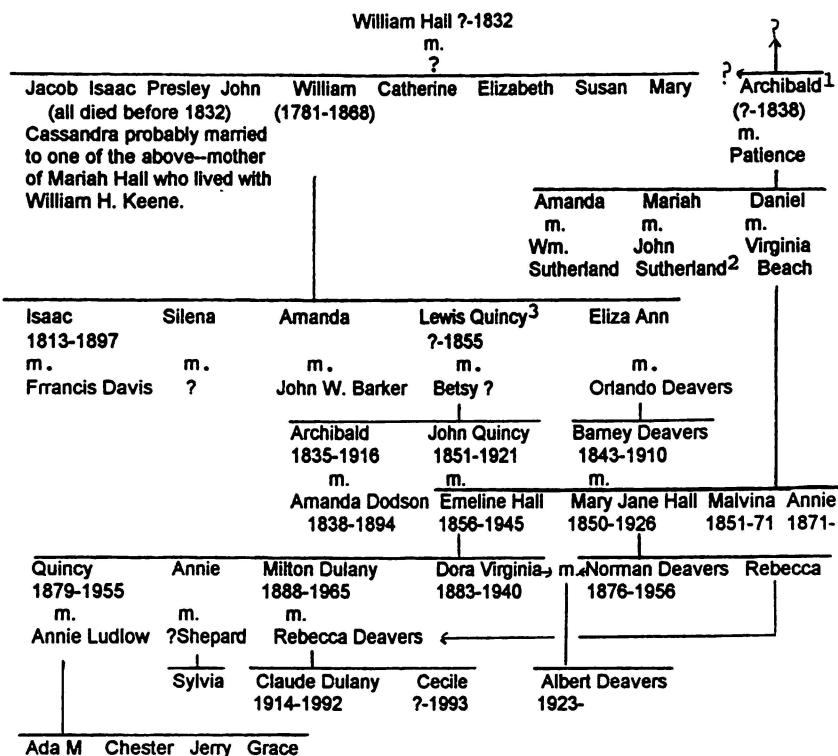
Chain Of Title For Keene's Mill

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Ownership</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1.	James Keene II	?--1833	DB B2 396	<1800--dammed Pohick for an additional source of power.
2.	James Keene III	1834-1836	No deed	Son & heir of James II
3.	Silas Burke	1836	WB R 375	Keene's Executor
4.	Presley Barker & Archibald Hall	1838	DB D3 509	Hall died in 1838. Mill is auctioned.
5.	Wm. & John Sutherland	1838	DB D3 539	purchased at public auction for \$800.
6.	Wm. H. Keene	1849	DB O3 80	Purchased mill for \$800. Had to put mill up for sale to pay legal expenses.
7.	Henry W. Thomas	1855	DB X3 15	Keene's trustee. Auctioned of mill for \$480.
8.	Geo. Chichester	1857	DB Z3 206	Died in 1858.
9.	John H. Chichester	1860	No deed.	Son & heir of George. Tax list show no buildings on property.
10	Wilmer & Montgomery Corse	1869	DB L4 482	Bought property for \$300. Moved out of area. No record after 1892.

**Partial and Tentative Genealogy
of The Keene Family**



**Partial and Tentative Genealogy
of The Hall Family**



¹ Archibald Hall acquired Keene's mill in 1838, but Archibald died that same year.

² William and John Sutherland owned Keene's mill from 1838 to 1849. They sold it to William H. Keene.

³ Lewis Q. Hall died on 29 October 1855 from a knife wound received in a fight at Keene's mill between himself and William H. Keene, witnessed by John W. Barker.

Richard Ratcliffe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Ratcliffe", with a small circle containing the number "4" at the bottom right.

The Man, His Courthouse, and His Town

by
Constance K. Ring

Richard Ratcliffe; the name appears repeatedly in the records of Britain, Maryland, and Virginia. A genealogy of the Ratcliffes by June Ratcliffe McReynolds traces the name in Britain to the early 1400's.¹ A Richard Ratcliffe, friend of King Richard III, died on Bosworth Field defending the king in 1485.^{2a} A brass effigy of Sir John Ratclif appears on his tomb in Crosthwaite church, Cumberland County, England, dated 1527.^{2b} A seventeenth century Charles Ratchliffe was one of twenty persons transported to Northampton County, Virginia, in 1650;³ fourteen years later, Charles Radcliffe of Accomack County received six hundred acres of land for transporting twelve persons into the colony,⁴ and in 1666 he received another five hundred acres for bringing ten new settlers.⁵ Already in Virginia by 1634 was Michael Ratcliffe, Gent., of Chisekiake (York County)⁶ and in 1641 Edward Ratcliffe appeared in Upper Norfolk County as one of five servants brought to Virginia by Richard Preston.⁷ An eighteenth century Richard Ratcliffe of Charles County, Maryland, was the grandfather of Richard Ratcliffe of Fairfax County, Virginia.⁸

There are more than five hundred references to Richard Ratcliffe in the Fairfax court records. He first appears in 1771 being sworn a deputy sheriff.⁹ This was the first of an unbroken chain of public service positions which he held for fifty-four years. He served as sheriff, coroner, justice, patroller, Truro Parish overseer of the poor, courthouse lot commissioner, jail inspector, superintendent of elections, poorhouse, road, and tax commissioner, master commissioner of the court,¹⁰ and designer and developer of the town which became the Fairfax County seat. For reasons not at all clear, this impressive record and the man who held it have been largely ignored by historians.

Richard was the son of John Ratcliffe,¹¹ who signed the 1770 Non-Importation Broadside, an agreement among merchants not to import British goods. John was the son of Richard Ratcliffe of Charles County, Maryland.¹²

In late 1750 or 1751, John Ratcliffe married Ann A., widow of Thomas Moxley, whose will was recorded in Fairfax County court March 27, 1750.¹³ Ann has been reported to have been the daughter of William Gunnell; another, more reliable, source claims her father was John Smith of Richmond County, Virginia.¹⁴ Richard was born about 1752.¹⁵ He was half brother to Ann's children by Thomas Moxley, who mentions them in his will: sons James, John, Joseph, and Thomas, and daughters Elizabeth Daniel (O'Daniel), Jemima Windsor, and Mary Ann Moxley. A brother William is also mentioned. Whether Ann was the mother of all of Thomas's children, or if the eldest were by a previous wife, is speculative. Ann was certainly the mother of the youngest children: James, John, and Mary Ann. She was appointed their guardian on June 26, 1750.¹⁶ Ann was allotted her dower in Thomas Moxley's estate on October 23, 1750.¹⁷ Among the items awarded her were two slaves, a feather bed and furniture, twelve hogs, a cow and yearling, a black horse branded with the letter "A", some pewter, wooden ware, two iron pots, a griddle, a looking glass, bible, and "two old hatts." She also received one-third use of a servant named William Connell worth sixteen shillings eight pence. Her sons James and John received four slaves to be divided between them, and James was allotted a sorrel horse.

On April 10, 1750, Ann leased from Henry Fitzhugh one hundred acres, on Cattail Branch on the Ravensworth tract, for the term of the longest lifetime of herself or sons James and John.¹⁸ She was to pay a yearly rent of six hundred and fifty-four pounds

of good Lawful Tobacco to be made on the said plantation and from thence to be Rolled or conveyed to a Warehouse or Rolling House at or near a convenient Landing on the Potomack River.

Ann was also to plant at least one hundred good apple trees within three years of the date of the lease. Why she left Thomas Moxley's home on Pohick Run,¹⁹ taking sons John and James and possibly daughter Mary Ann, is a question unanswered by the records. But within a year Ann married John Ratcliffe.²⁰ John was a constable "from the Church Road to Accotink up to Difficult."²¹ He was a witness in the Fairfax County court in Alexandria early in 1758, coming from Loudoun County twenty-one miles.²² But by 1760, he was leasing land on the southwest side of present-day Backlick and Braddock Roads, and owned five slaves.^{23a} Was John Ratcliffe

already leasing the property by 1750? Was he Ann's neighbor across the road? Was Richard the only child of Ann and John? An obituary in the *Alexandria Gazette* in 1843 tells us that there was at least one other.^{23b}

Died at Walnut Grove July 23, 1842 Mrs. Ann Smith Summers, widow and relict of George Summers, Esq. in the 85th year of her age. This venerable lady was the daughter of John Radcliffe of Fairfax County, where she herself was born October 16, 1758. Although of delicate physical constitution, and often times the victim of disease she has survived all the contemporary members of her Family ...

An unrecorded document, dated 1802, in the Fairfax Circuit Court Archives, suggests other relationships:²⁴

This Indenture made this Sixth day of November in the year of our Lord 1802 by and between Anne Radcliff Benjamin Saunders & Ann his wife of Fairfax County in Virginia of the One part and Philip Dodderidge of Brooke County of the Commonwealth aforsd of the other part Witnesseth that Whereas the Said Ann Radcliffe is Mother & the Said Ann Saunders is Sister, & together with William Radcliff of Rockingham County in North Carolina Richard Radcliff of Virginia Filenda Wolbright wife of Jacob Wolbright of Wilts County in the State of Georgia & Daniel Radcliffe of Virginia, are heirs at Law of Edward Radcliffe, otherwise Edward Davis Radcliffe deceased, now this Indenture Witnesseth that the Said Anne Radcliffe & the Said Benjamin & Anne his wife for and in consideration of One hundred Dollars to them in hand paid by the Said Philip have Bargained & Sold and by these presents do grant Bargain Sell and convey to the Said Philip their one third part of a certain tract or parcel of land containing four hundred acres of land lying in Brooke county in the Commonwealth of Virginia in that part formerly called Yohiogenia, on the waters of Kings Creek granted to the Said Edward by patent bearing date the 7th (?) day of March 1788 ...

...provided that unless the Said Philip Shall deposit with William Moss Clerk of Fairfax in cash or bills, for the use of the Said Ann Radcliff & the Said Benjamin Saunders & Ann his wife, the sum of Eighty five Dollars on or before the last day March next then these presents to become void, cease & determine. In testimony Whereof the parties aforesaid have hereto Set their hands & Seals - signed, Sealed and delivered on the day & year aforesaid in presence of

John Walker
George Sanders
Edward Sanders }

witnesses as
to A.R.
& A.S.

her
Ann Radcliff
mark
Benjamin Sanders
Nancy Sanders

Edward Ratcliffe had lived on 100 acres in Loudoun County, land owned by the heirs of Thomas Awbrey, “joining Colo. Clapham.”²⁵ Edward died in 1789.²⁶ The names Saunders, Woolbright, and Ratcliffe appear together in Fairfax records in 1792 when Lewis Saunders and Barnaby Woolbright, his son-in-law, sold to Richard Ratcliffe 102 acres on Accotink Run,²⁷ land on which, six years later, a new court house would be built. The 1802 document was proved on the first day of the December term at Fairfax Court House by John Walker and George Sanders who each received two dollars for their attendance. Other witnesses were Thomas Millan and Lachlan McIntosh, both Fairfax County landowners.

In 1766, John Ratcliffe took another lease from Henry Fitzhugh, for 179 acres on the northeast side of Backlick and Braddock Roads. Like Ann’s, it was for the term of the longest of three lives: his own, wife Ann, or son Richard.²⁸

By 1773, John had transferred this lease “for a valuable consideration” to David Price, who obtained a new lease from Fitzhugh for the property in the same year.²⁹ Price operated a tavern on this land, at the northeast corner of the intersection of Backlick and Braddock Roads³⁰ until his death in 1785.³¹ The tavern continued in operation until 1802 when Price’s widow Mary and sons Benoni, William, and Hezekiah relinquished the lease.³²

Richard acquired an education, probably from his father John who signed his name to court records, while Ann, his mother, signed with her mark (A).^{33a} The earliest Ratcliffe signatures in Fairfax County records omit the “e” but by the 1790’s the full spelling regularly appears.

Richard’s activities during the Revolutionary War can only be surmised. Very few records relating to him during that period survive. A February 1782 public service claim shows that a Richard Ratcliffe was paid L4.3.4. for two hundred and fifty pounds of beef.^{33b} He was also collector of the Truro Parish levy from 1781-1785. But whether this was Richard, son of John, or Richard, father of John, is unclear.

Richard married Louisiana Boling, daughter of Gerrard and Martha [Moxley]³⁴ Boling, by 1777.³⁵ Martha was the daughter of William, the brother mentioned in Thomas Moxley’s will,³⁶ and first cousin to Richard’s half-siblings. Louisiana’s sister Ann married Peter Wise, a prominent Alexandria merchant and city official.³⁷ Richard and Louisiana (Locian) raised nine children: Robert, Samuel, John, Charles, Patsy, Penelope, Locian, Nancy, and Jane.³⁸ Through his children’s marriages, Richard became allied to some of the largest land-holding families in Fairfax County: the Gunnells, Jacksons, Mosses, Fitzhughs, and Lees.³⁹ His family was cer-

tainly known to George Washington, who noted in his diary for November 11, 1797, "Mrs. Ratcliffe and her son came to dinner."⁴⁰

Richard owned and leased several lots in Alexandria and probably resided there for convenience to the courthouse where he attended to the duties of his offices.⁴¹ But he began to buy land in the area of present-day Fairfax City in 1786, acquiring 544 acres in that year, 754.5 acres in 1788, 102 acres in 1792.^{42a} One of his earliest acquisitions, 192 acres on Accotink Run for L400 "current money," was evidently contested by the heirs of George Mason who had patented 1930 acres there in 1714.^{42b} An 1838 deed recites that a portion of Mason's grant was

...entered upon by the late Richard Ratcliffe of said County and now in possession of his heirs or some one or more of them ...

By 1794 Richard owned most of the land between the turnpike, or Mountain Road (now Braddock Road) on the south, Ox Road (now West Ox and Waples Mill Roads) on the west, Ellzey's Church Road (Old Lee Highway or Route 29-211) on the east, and Accotink Run on the north. Between 1788 and 1791, Richard had also bought the interests of the heirs of Lewis Ellzey's estate, though no specific acreage is given in the deeds.⁴³ With his acquisition of 1000 acres of the vast Ravensworth tract in 1798, Richard's east line advanced to within a half mile west of present-day Pickett Road.⁴⁴ By the end of that year, Richard had acquired almost 3000 acres,⁴⁵ at a cost of about L5000. It is unlikely that, as a minor public official for much of this time, Richard would have earned this large sum. It is more reasonable to assume that he inherited it. A 1788 bond in the Fairfax Circuit Court Archives, made by the widow of Richard Ratcliffe of Charles County, Maryland, states:⁴⁶

Know all men by these Presents that I Barbary Ratcliffe of the County of Fairfax and Commonwealth of Virginia am held and firmly bound unto Elizabeth Steele of the County & Commonwealth aforesaid in the full and Just Sum of One thousand Pounds Current money of Virginia to be Paid unto the Said Elizabeth Steele her Heirs Executors, administrators or Assigns to which Payment well and Truly to be made and Done I bind myself my Heirs, Executors, & administrators, firmly by these Presents, Signed with my hand Sealed with my Seal & Dated this 18th day of April - 1788

Whereas Richard Ratcliff Deed late Husband to & of the above bound Barbary Ratcliff (Widow) Died Entestate - Leaving at the time of his Death, Certain Valuable Estate in Charles County & State of Maryland= as also in Fairfax County & Commonwealth of Virginia = administrat-

tion of which Estate have Since (his the said Richard Ratcliffs Death) been Granted by the Court of Fairfax County, unto the above bound Barbary Ratcliff = and Whereas the Said Richard Ratcliff Decd Left no children by the Said Barbary, but Left three children by a former Wife Viz: John Ratcliff - Ann Farr, & the before mentiond Elizabeth Steele = with Whoome the Said Barbary Ratcliff has Entered into an Agreement to Divide the Said Estate so Left by the Said Richard Decd and the Division being Previously agreed upon between all Parties Concerned therein, is as follows Viz: She the above bound Barbary Ratcliff Admx etc. doth hereby agree to, and by these Presents for herself & her Heirs doth grant unto them the Said John Ratcliffe, Ann Farr, & Elizabeth Steele, all the Right, Title, Interest, of & to all and Singular the Estate, both Reale & personal, Which the Said Richard Ratcliff Decd died Possessed of, or was Intituled to in the State of Maryland for and in consideration, of them the Said John, Ann, & Elizabeths Releasing their Interest of & to the Estate which said Richard Died Possessed of in Virginia (money Excepted) as by their Releasement will more fully appear -

The Condition of the above Obligation therefore is Such that if the above bound Barbary Ratcliff Admx & do & shall forever Grant & Release unto the said Elizabeth Steele and her Heirs, all the Right of Dower or otherwise, which she the Said barbary Ratcliff-Admx (as widow of the Said Richard Ratcliffe Decd) is or may be Intituled to, of Said Estate- and if the Said barbary Ratcliff admx & doth forever Defend the Same & Every Part thereof unto the Said Elizabeth Steele & her Heirs free from the Claim of her the Said barbary and from all other Person or Persons, Claiming from or under her, then the Above Obligation to be Voide. Otherwise to be & Remain in full force & Virtue in Law Signed, Sealed & acknowledged in the Presents of -

Barbary X Ratcliff

John Ratcliffe

Ewd Ratcliff

George fielder

A similar bond was executed for Ann Farr. Though not found, it is likely that a third bond was made for John. Cash was probably divided equally among the heirs. Barbara had been the widow of Samuel Halley whose 1777 will was witnessed by John Ratcliffe, Barbara's soon-to-be-step-son.⁴⁷

Richard probably supplemented his income by performing services on commission and by lending money. The 1782 estate account of Benjamin Colclough, deceased, lists

To cash paid Richard Ratcliff for Selling the Estate L2.7.

The 1784 estate account of George Robertson shows a payment to Richard of 134 lbs. of tobacco “at 25/pr ct.” The estate accounts of Thomas Stubblefield and John Wiley both show two entries for payments to Richard Ratcliffe, though some of the payment might possibly have been for judgments due Richard as deputy sheriff.⁴⁸

The area in which Richard was buying land was, compared to Alexandria, the county’s social and commercial center, a wilderness. Though the Mountain, Ox, and Church Roads passed through the area, there was little activity. Payne’s Church on the Ox Road, completed about 1768 by Edward Payne of *Hope Park* near present-day Popes Head Road,⁴⁹ to serve congregants in western Truro Parish, was rarely used. In the 1790’s, it occasionally still served the local population when a minister was available. Authors Martin Petersilia and Russell Wright, in their study of *Hope Park*, describe the area this way:⁵⁰

In truth, the place was very isolated, in a relative sense even more so than it had been in the days when the Payne family flourished there. The era of the Revolution both changed not only political and social patterns, but the economic and religious structure as well ... Payne’s Church had been virtually closed since before Edward Payne had left the county in 1785. There was an occasional service, not always Episcopalian, held in the building, but there was no regular church-going there anymore.

Payne’s Church, in fact, may have been superseded by a new religious force in rural Fairfax County, the Baptist Meeting House. The 1792 will of James Halley, Sr., who owned land on the Ox Road about one mile south of present-day Kamp Washington, states:⁵¹

Imprimis I give and bequeath unto my son Henry Simpson Halley the tract or parcel of land whereon I now live, together with the other lands adjoining that on which I at present live, which are now my property, situate in the parish of Truro ... and on the waters of Popeshead and Difficult excepting the lot of land whereon the Popeshead Meeting House now stands including the spring neare thereto ... which said Lott of land I have reserved & set apart for the use and benefit of the present Baptist Society ...

The will was witnessed on February 1, 1792 by Richard Ratcliffe, his daughter Penelope and son Robert.

The Popeshead Meeting House was organized by the Ketocton Baptist Association in 1775 with one hundred twenty-one members.⁵² Some

congregants traveled great distances to attend the two-day monthly services.⁵³ Others were local such as Lewis Pritchard who lived along the old courthouse road,⁵⁴ John Dawson on the Newgate/Alexandria Turnpike west of Ox Road,⁵⁵ and Amos Fox who owned a grist mill on Difficult.⁵⁶ Popeshead's membership declined over the years as new Baptist churches, such as Frying Pan and Backlick, won congregants away. Henry S. Halley remained at Popeshead, true to his father's bequest, but William Halley, his brother, was attending Backlick by 1795. Barbara Ratcliffe, in her will dated December 18, 1794, after freeing negro Betty, and a bequest to her nephew George Fielder, devised the remainder of her estate to the Baptist Church at Backlick. She named William Halley her co-executor.⁵⁷ In 1800, membership at Popeshead had dwindled to thirty, and in 1802 the Popeshead Meeting was discontinued.⁵⁸ No record has been found to tell us if Richard Ratcliffe was among the members.

Dr. David Stuart, who purchased *Hope Park* in 1785 from Edward Payne, was the son and grandson of Anglican rectors. What were his thoughts about the non-conformist Baptists holding regular services at Popeshead two miles from his home? Authors Petersilia and Wright comment on this:⁵⁹

Perhaps the most significant legislation on which David Stuart had the opportunity to vote during his four years as a Delegate in Richmond is, ironically, the only one for which it has been possible to determine conclusively how that vote was cast. In 1785 the proposition first suggested by Thomas Jefferson in 1779 for the disestablishment of the Anglican church in Virginia was at last introduced into the General Assembly in an atmosphere which gave some faint hope of passage over conservative opposition. Then, two of the state's most influential radicals announced their violent opposition. Ex-governor Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee, recently returned from a second tour of duty as President of the Continental Congress, led the fight against the adoption of the measure. The Assembly's decision to hold a popular referendum on the issue was all that saved Jefferson's whole scheme and one of the most important documents of personal liberty in American history. The freeholders overwhelmingly approved Jefferson's "Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom." ... Disestablishment was voted 74 to 20 on December 17, 1785. David Stuart cast his vote with the majority ...

Richard Ratcliffe, middle class and ambitious, and David Stuart, physician, delegate to the Virginia General Assembly, step-father to Martha Washington's grandchildren, were acquainted. Both men held positions at the Fairfax County courthouse in Alexandria in 1786, Stuart as a justice⁶⁰

and Richard as deputy sheriff.⁶¹ What influence, if any, did *Hope Park*'s new owner, or the presence of the Baptists, have on Richard's decision to buy property in the area? Perhaps a euphoria after the successful Revolutionary War, a sense of new possibilities, as well as a rapidly expanding family, partly motivated him. Whatever his reasons, Richard must have seen opportunity. In 1789, the Virginia legislature ceded almost forty square miles of eastern Fairfax County, including Alexandria, to the District of Columbia.⁶² About eighty square miles were soon to be returned from Loudoun County, shifting the boundaries of Fairfax County westward. The land Richard was buying was at the center of the new county, and the new county would need a new courthouse and a new county seat.

The Fairfax County courthouse in Alexandria, where petitions and grievances, misdemeanors and felonies, had been heard since May 19, 1752,⁶³ had undergone numerous repairs over the years. Maintenance was not neglected. In 1754, courthouse janitor William Gladin, who received a salary of eight hundred pounds of tobacco a year, was instructed by the justices to clean the building, find wood and water, and sweep every court day.⁶⁴ In 1755, a table was ordered for the clerk at a cost of fifteen shillings and sheriff's boxes were constructed for £4.⁶⁵ Post and rail fencing around the courthouse lot was added in 1756 as well as a "necessary house."⁶⁶ In 1758, a desk was made⁶⁷ and a sundial "fixed to the courthouse yard."⁶⁸ A schoolhouse was built on the courthouse lot in 1759⁶⁹ and a firewood storage shed in 1762.⁷⁰ In that year, John Patterson made the first repairs,⁷¹ and in 1763 a new prison was built.⁷² Further repairs were undertaken in 1765: windows glazed, new wood floors and steps installed, new bricks placed in the foundation, plastering mended and whitewashed, windows shuttered and a new door replaced the old. A table was added to the jury room. In 1772, stocks and a whipping post were built,⁷³ and in 1783 new stocks and a pillory were ordered.⁷⁴ In 1784, the courthouse was again ordered to be viewed for repairs. Bids were let.⁷⁵ Simon Summers was awarded the contract; he made the necessary repairs in 1785.⁷⁶ In the same year, the engine house for the Sun Fire Company was erected on the courthouse lot.⁷⁷ In 1787 the courthouse again underwent repairs and Jacob Shuck offered the winning bid.⁷⁸ Scales for weighing hay were added and the bar was altered and enlarged.⁷⁹ But by December 1788, costs of repairs had escalated, and on January 20, 1789⁸⁰

a remonstrance against levying tobacco or money for the purpose of building or repairing a courthouse in the town of Alexandria signed by a number of inhabitants of this County was produced in court and read.

By November 1790, the courthouse on Fairfax Street in Alexandria was unfit for use. The justices agreed to hold court in the market house, built in 1784 on the courthouse lot adjacent to the jail.⁸¹ The clerk's office moved into the town schoolhouse for the safekeeping of the county records.⁸²

In November, 1789, George Mason presented a petition to the Virginia Assembly to remove the Fairfax County courthouse from Alexandria.⁸³ In the same year, the Assembly mandated that a new courthouse be constructed within one mile of Price's Ordinary, six miles west of Alexandria.⁸⁴ On April 20, 1790, the justices appointed commissioners Charles Little, William Payne, John Moss, and Benjamin Dulany to view the lands within one mile of Price's Ordinary for building a new courthouse and jail.⁸⁵ An entry in the court minutes for May 17, 1790 reads:⁸⁶

The Commissioners appointed to view the lands within one mile of the crossroads at Price's Ordinary and to treat with the proprietors for the price of two acres whereon to erect a courthouse, prison, pillory and stocks returned the following report (Viz)

In obedience to an order of the worshipful Court of Fairfax County We the Subscribers met at the house of Mrs. Price's on Monday the Third day of this instant and the question being put first how we were to ascertain the mile mentioned in the order of the court whether by a straight line or by measurement as the road now goes, this was determined by a large majority of the Commissioners that the line ought to be run nearly as the road went we plainly discovering the impracticability of the roads being removed either to the right or left of its present course from the unevenness of the ground and the Difficultys in crossing Indian Run either above or below the present ford we accordingly proceeded to lay off the mile beginning at the Centre of the Crossroads at Price's and run a north easterly course nearly with the road ... 322 poles to the land of Mrs. Margaret West which we viewed with great attention and could find no proper situation for erecting publick buildings thereon there being no good water within four hundred yards ... It being suggested to us that the land of Thomas Grafford junior was within one mile of Price's we went and viewed the said ground and inquired of the tenant if the water was good and convenient to the place where we were viewing and he informed us there was no good water near his house and that he drank run water ... We then taking into consideration the whole of this business first that the mile ended on the land of the heirs of Henry Fitzhugh for which a good title cannot now be obtained, and secondly that the situation on Mrs. West's land is but indifferent having no natural advantages for publick Buildings, Thirdly that the situation on Thomas Grafford's land we think more exceptionable then the others for seeing the great expence that would

attend removeing publick roads near a mile from their present ground ... we therefore make our report that we have found no proper place within one mile of the crossroads from Price's which can at present be had or obtained to erect a courthouse ...

But upon consideration of the above Report the Court are of Opinion that they ought to proceed to levy tobacco for building a Courthouse, Goal, etc., but the Commissioners who being Justices and present conceiving themselves equally intitled to give their opinion concerning the question for levying Tobacco for the purposes aforesaid were of a contrary opinion whereupon the motion for levying Tobacco was lost.

Opposition to removing the court from Alexandria was outspoken, though the town would almost certainly become part of the new nation's capital soon. Petitions signed by prominent citizens were submitted to the Assembly. Much of the opposition came from merchants whose business would suffer from a relocation of the court farther west, and by citizens living in the Alexandria area who enjoyed the social advantages and convenience of court in their vicinity.⁸⁷ Nothing further was seriously done about relocating the court for almost a decade.

By 1789, Richard Ratcliffe had moved his family from Alexandria to his land on Accotink Run, "on the road from the county line to the white oak spring."⁸⁸ He continued to attend to his duties in Alexandria, serving as justice,⁸⁹ sheriff,⁹⁰ coroner,⁹¹ and tax commissioner,⁹² making the long trip down the Ox Road, then east along the Newgate/Alexandria Turnpike (Braddock Road),⁹³ a distance of more than fifteen miles. When not in court, Richard witnessed wills and deeds for neighbors, appraised and administered estates, took depositions, superintended elections, assigned tithables to keep the roads in repair, and viewed land for new routes and recommended route alterations. Road maintenance had always been poor. A 1753 entry in the court minutes states that the road overseers were fined fifteen shillings for not keeping the road in repair.⁹⁴ A 1754 order assessed fines "for not putting up posts or directions at the fork ..."⁹⁵ In 1762, commissioners were to view a way for a road and report how to "shun the miry places."⁹⁶ Complaints about poor road conditions appear throughout the colonial and post-Revolutionary court records. Travel must have been especially difficult in bad weather, yet Richard made the arduous round trip to Alexandria for more than ten years. Possibly he remained overnight on court days. In his will, he leaves to his wife Locian, among other property, "my house and lott in Alexandria,"⁹⁷ but more than likely he rented it out. Poor roads not only frustrated citizens and public officials, but hampered the commercial development of the county. The need for well-maintained

roads from farms to markets was to result, within six years of the removal of the courthouse to a site fifteen miles west of Alexandria, in a turnpike which Richard could not have anticipated in 1786 but from which he was greatly to benefit.

After the return of eastern Loudoun County lands to Fairfax County by the Virginia legislature during the 1797 session, the justices had the responsibility for selecting a site for the courthouse of Fairfax County "at or as near to the center thereof."⁹⁸ No longer was Price's Ordinary at the center of the county. Richard, a justice since 1794,⁹⁹ sitting regularly on the court, offered, for one dollar, four acres as a site for the new courthouse, on land he had purchased in 1792 on the branches of Accotink Run.¹⁰⁰ He also offered

the free and undisturbed use and priviledge of all springs upon the lands ...

Upon accepting the property, the trustees ordered Richard to sink a well.¹⁰¹ The recorded deed for the four acres, dated June 27, 1799, was written to correct errors in an earlier deed of 1798 which was not recorded. The corrected deed, several pages long but one sentence, transcribed here in part, explains Richard's intent:¹⁰²

... Whereas the said Richard Ratcliffe and Serian (sic) his wife did by their indenture bearing date the twenty second day of June one thousand seven hundred and ninety eight grant bargain and sell unto them the said Charles Little, David Stuart, William Payne, James Wren, and George Minor and their Heirs forever a certain piece of Ground containing four acres ... In trust to and for the use of the Justices of the Peace ... to erect thereupon an house for Holding the pleas of the said County of Fairfax, a Clerks Office for the safe Keeping of the Records and papers of the said County, a Goal and all and every other building and Machine necessary for the Justices ... but for no other use or purpose whatever ... And whereas some doubts Have arisen from the terms of the said Trust whether such an Estate is vested in the said Trustees for the use of the said County as in case the pleas of the said County shall at any future day be removed from thence ... the said Trustees ... could make sale of the said parcel of land ... And it is hereby covenanted and agreed upon by and between the said parties and declared to be the true intent and Meaning of these presents, that if at any time after the Courthouse and other Necessary Buildings shall be erected upon the said piece of land, the Court of the said County shall cease to be held thereupon, then in that case it shall and May [be] Lawfull for the said Charles Little, David Stuart, William Payne, James Wren, and George

Minor, and their Heirs to sell and Dispose of the said parcel of Land and all and singular the Buildings thereupon Erected ...

The court acted quickly and, on April 16, 1798, appointed Benjamin Dulany and George Gilpin¹⁰³

to consult with proper workmen and report to the next Court a plan of the necessary buildings for the use of the said County, with a calculation of the probable Costs and expence of the same.

The following day the sheriff was ordered to¹⁰⁴

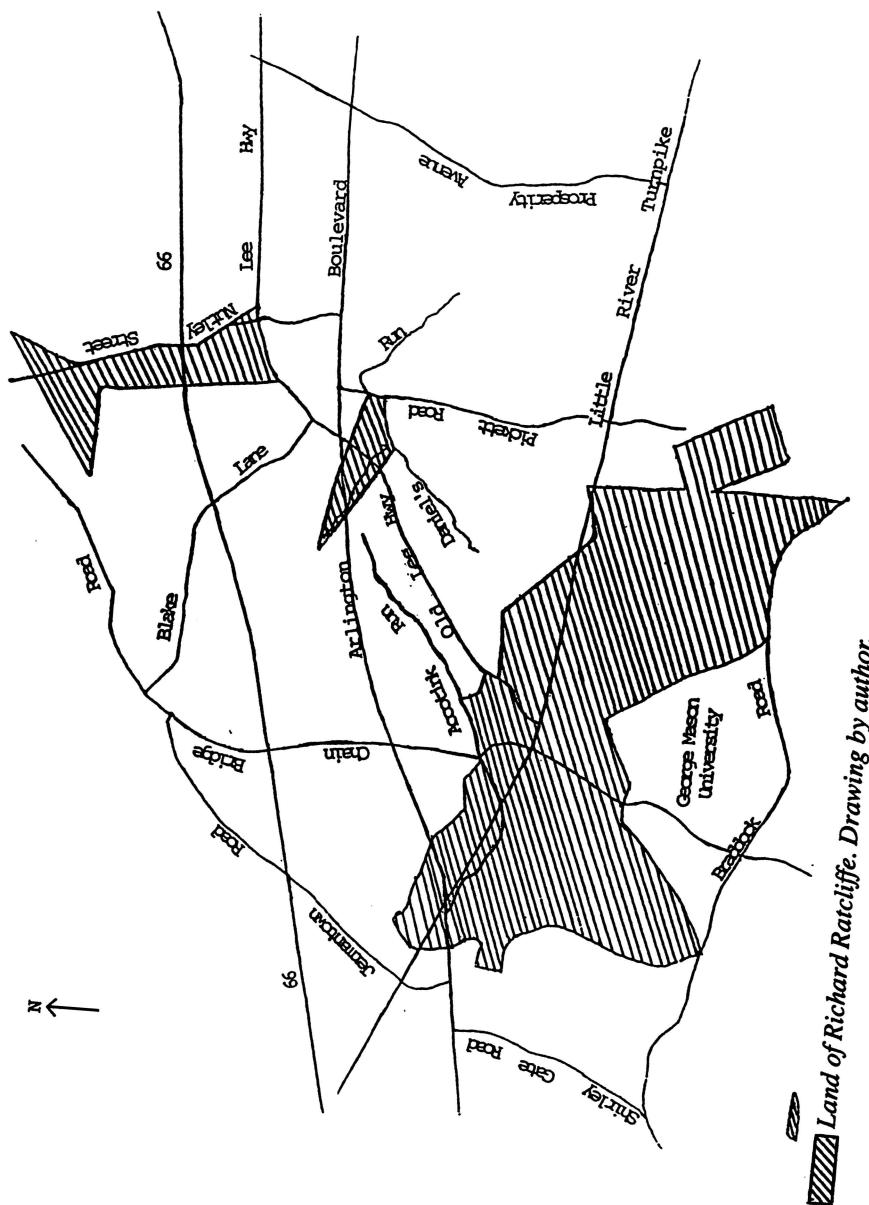
collect from the inhabitants ... thirty five cents per poll for each titheable person to be applied towards erecting the Public buildings for the use of the County, and in case of non-payment, that he levy the same by distress.

On May 22, the court ordered that commissioners Charles Little, David Stuart, William Payne, James Wren, and George Minor¹⁰⁵

cause to be erected one Court house forty feet by Thirty ... with sixteen feet pitch with a twelve foot Portico, one Gaol forty feet by twenty with three rooms on the first floor and two on the second, with an addition to the back below of a room fifteen feet by ten, One clerks office twenty four feet by eighteen to be arched or covered with Slate or Tile, and one Gaolers House twenty four feet by eighteen with Stocks, Pillory and Whipping Post and that the said Commissioners be authorized to let the building of the same to the lowest bidder ... and ... that they do advertise the time and place of letting the said work for three weeks in the Alexandria papers.

On May 1, 1798, the four acres were laid off "near Caleb Earp's Store."¹⁰⁶ The initial architect selected to design the courthouse was, evidently, Clotworthy Stephenson. A notice in the *Alexandria Advertiser* May 23, 1798, placed by the commissioners appointed to let the contracts for the erection of the building, stated that the plans were on view at the office of Captain George Deneale, county clerk, and that architect Clotworthy Stephenson would be available for explanations.¹⁰⁷ A month later, another notice appeared in the *Advertiser* stating that the architect was Mr. Wren.¹⁰⁸ Construction evidently proceeded on schedule and the commissioners accepted the completed buildings on January 27, 1800.¹⁰⁹

No sooner were the new courthouse, jail, and clerk's office completed than the justices decided that four acres were inadequate for the use of the court. No record exists for the acquisition of an additional six acres from Richard Ratcliffe, but on March 13, 1800 "in obedience to the order of the court" ten acres were laid off¹¹⁰



■ Land of Richard Ratcliffe. Drawing by author.

for the prison rules of this County ... Including the sd four acres, the Court House, Goal, Clerks office, the brick Tavern, Kitchen, Stable and Store house.

The original four acres measured 528' x 330'. The ten acres measured 709.5' x 610.5', and included approximately all the land between present-day West Street and University Drive, and South Street (extended west to West Street) to 130' north of Main Street (Little River Turnpike).

Court was held for the first time in the new courthouse on the third Monday in April (April 21st) 1800.¹¹¹ The clerk was granted temporary permission to keep his office in Alexandria due to the inconvenience of an immediate move to the new location.¹¹² By court order of November 18, 1801, John Bogue and Mungo Dykes, the contractors, received their final payment of \$101.97.¹¹³ Dykes had been a witness to the deed from Richard Ratcliffe to the courthouse trustees for the original four acres.

Petitions of sutlers and retailers of liquor who wanted to set up shop on the courthouse lot were denied, though two of the justices, William Deneale and George Summers, dissented.¹¹⁴ Ordinaries on the courthouse lots were not unusual; "Mr. West's Ordinary" operated on the eight-acre prison bounds at the earliest known Fairfax County courthouse,¹¹⁵ and within the six-acre courthouse tract given by Colonel William Fairfax in 1746, one acre was laid off for "John Colvill, Gent., to build an ordinary thereon."¹¹⁶ Benjamin Sebastian kept an ordinary on the two-acre courthouse "square" in Alexandria in 1760.¹¹⁷ Richard himself owned the tavern and stable opposite the new courthouse, a probable reason he objected to the licensing of competitors on the courthouse lot. But Richard was clear in his deed to the trustees, stating that as long as the four acres were used for holding court they were to be used for no other purpose. Yet a curious violation occurred within two months of the first court term. Reverend Jeremiah Moore was granted permission by the justices "to preach in the courthouse on such days as he may appoint."¹¹⁸ Richard, evidently, did not object, but no other preacher was offered the same courtesy.

Jeremiah Moore, the inspired champion of religious liberty, was preaching in Fairfax County as early as 1773. Anti-establishment, he was ordered by the court in September of that year to:¹¹⁹

not preach publish or expound the Holy Gospel to any congregation of people whatever.

In October he was cited for preaching without a license.¹²⁰ He was not licensed to perform marriages in Fairfax County until July, 1785,¹²¹ after

the Revolutionary War and the disestablishment of the Anglican Church. Moore was pastor at Difficult Run Church when it was organized in 1775 with seventy-five members, on land he later purchased, in 1782, from Rezin Offutt and Thomas Lewis on Wolf Trap and Difficult Runs.¹²² Though he preached regularly at Difficult Run, Reverend Moore was also itinerant, preaching at Alexandria, Frying Pan, and Backlick, where in 1790 he leased two acres from William Fitzhugh for ninety-nine years at five shillings per year, renewable at the end of that term ... “on the road leading from Price’s to Colchester”¹²³

for the use of the regular Baptists of the County of Fairfax to erect thereupon a place of Publick Worship and to apply the same to any other religious purposes they may desire ... on Behalf of the said Society of regular Baptists in Fairfax County ...

There is no record to tell us where Richard Ratcliffe first heard the sermons of Jeremiah Moore. In 1773, when Moore preached in Alexandria to the consternation of the court, Richard was twenty-one years old, a deputy sheriff, surely aware of the stir being created by a man only six years older than himself. Possibly he also heard him at Difficult, or Popeshead, in company with his Halleys neighbors and his grandfather’s widow Barbara. No membership records have been found for these Meetings, but that Richard was impressed by the words and personality of Jeremiah Moore there can be little doubt.

Richard was living on his Accotink lands by 1789, the same year Reverend Moore sold his 264 acres at Difficult Run to James Wiley.¹²⁴ It was probably in that same year that Richard sold 600 acres of his Accotink holdings to Moore, land on which Moorefield, the Reverend’s home in present-day Vienna, Virginia, still stands.¹²⁵ It is certain that Moore lived on this land, only three miles from Richard’s home, by 1791; a court order for April 19th of that year charges Jeremiah Moore, Richard Ratcliffe, and others to view a proposed road from “Mathew Boswell’s shop [on Ellzey’s Church Road, or Old Lee Highway] to widow Summers lane.”¹²⁶ Near neighbors, Ratcliffe and Moore must have been close acquaintances, but at least one serious issue divided them: slavery. Moore opposed it while Ratcliffe upheld it. Though he lamented that he could do little to change the laws regarding slavery in his time, Moore, in 1797, convinced the Ketocton Baptist Association to open its membership to slaves.^{127a} In 1805, Moore released Negro Stephen who^{127b}

...is and shall forever be free from me, my Heirs Executors and Administrators, from all future service and shall to all intents and pur-

poses Enjoy all the rights and priviledges, that he may Lawfully enjoy within this Commonwealth, in the same manner as if he had been Born free ...

Jeremiah Moore died February 23, 1815.¹²⁸ His will, dated August 1, 1814, states he is in “good health and enjoying the full exercise of my intellectual faculties ...”¹²⁹ Richard, though he was to outlive Moore by a decade, wrote his will one month after Moore’s death.¹³⁰ He does not mention Moore’s passing, but the will suggests that Richard was stirred by a sense of urgency to distribute his property and to pay his debts. Surprisingly, neither will refers to salvation, redemption, or burial. The testators were concerned mainly with moneys due and debts to be paid and the equitable distribution of the estates. No inventory or estate account was recorded for Moore. The value of his estate at his death is not part of the public record. Moore appointed his wife Lydia his executrix to act without security, letters of administration, or appraisement. But another passage in Moore’s will suggests that although he owned a large tract of land, and a mill in Jefferson County, his personal possessions were few. Giving his son Francis, a preacher, his religious books, Moore states:

...for altho preaching is not a loosing Business, Still he that would discharge this duty in the fear of God, Will find it a heavy check on all worldly interest ...

By contrast, Richard, at his death, had a large personal estate. The total value, including slaves, farm stock and implements, furniture and kitchen ware, was \$4445.34.¹³¹ The rents due his estate totalled \$2363.93 with \$334.39 interest. Cash on hand, or due the estate, totalled \$982.12 with \$150.79 interest.¹³² Richard’s establishment, which he called Mount Vineyard, included a dwelling house with at least seven bedrooms, twenty-five slaves, cattle, sheep, hogs, turkeys, horses, a meat house and bee hives.¹³³ He owned numerous books including sermons, histories, atlases, and a biography of George Washington. He possessed silver plate and table ware, glassware and crockery, mirrors and pictures, a wine-still and tub. Among his personal articles were silver shoe and knee buckles, spectacles and sunglasses, and a watch. Clearly, Richard suffered no “check on all worldly interest.”

In May, 1797, John Ratcliffe gave to his son Richard his entire estate:¹³⁴ twelve slaves, five horses, ten head of cattle, ten head of sheep, ten hogs, four feather beds, one cart, one wagon, walnut furniture, tools and utensils, and the lease for the land he lived on belonging to William Fitzhugh. In return, Richard was to have the estate appraised by three “Impartial Disinterested Gentlemen of Information” in current money. He was to deduct

from the value all just debts, including a commission for himself, and to divide the residue into three equal parts, retaining one third for his own use. One third was to be given to Mary Palmer, preferably in slaves and moveable items. Mary's relationship to John is not stated. The last third was to be retained by Richard for his defense against a possible lawsuit by George Summers.

(should any so unjustly happen) ... as also to further satisfy one hundred pounds which at least the said George Summers hath Deprived the said John Ratcliffe of by collecting & appropriating the sd John Ratcliffe's Money to his own private use and unaccounted for ...

John's grievance against George Summers is not further explained, nor is it clear which George Summers, of possibly four in Fairfax records of the time, had injured him. One, a deputy sheriff, could have collected a judgment due John, but failed to turn the money over to him. Another, Colonel George Summers, was the husband of Ann Smith Ratcliffe, John's daughter, suggesting that the disagreement between the two men was a family matter.

Though Richard was at first adamant about the use of the courthouse property for no purpose other than holding pleas, his insistence on this seems to have lessened over the years. In December 1808, Hugh Violet was licensed to keep an ordinary at the courthouse,¹³⁵ and by 1817 elections were being held in the building.¹³⁶ Richard did object strenuously, however, when the justices ordered the county surveyor to:¹³⁷

lay off and set apart, to the Clerk of this County and his Successors, half an acre of land ... being a part of the four acres conveyed by Rich'd Ratcliffe dated 27th of June 1799 ...

Evidently, the clerk had not taken advantage of his claim to the half acre until 1813, when, on August 16th, Richard entered a lengthy remonstrance in the court record:¹³⁸

...I deny the right of the Court by any act of theirs, legally to let or convey to said Clerk or others, one inch of said Ground, except for the uses in said Deed is particularly Expressed and granted - That the Act of General Assembly authorises the Court to procure by purchase Such quantity of Ground, Contiguous to the Clerk's Office as they may think proper, for the use of the Clerk and his Successors, and to Levy the expence of such purchase on the Titheables of this County is not denied, but that any part of the ground aforesaid not sold but donated to the County for Certain Specific public uses, as Expressed in the aforesaid deed, Should be appropriated to the use and Benefit of an Indi-

vidual not known in the Conveyance is Contended to be Illegal and Unauthorized, for Admit the principal etc. Where will the evil stop as respects my Interest - if the Clerk can have the ground, he can build dwelling houses, and Livery Stables, etc, Occupy or rent them out, if permitted in Small uses, what will hinder him from makeing the most lucrative use and Advantage he may think proper thereof ...

The issue resurfaced in 1822 when Richard filed another remonstrance, this time against Peter B. Bradley, the jailor, who had charge of the “publick lott and property therein.” Bradley also kept the well pump locked during the dry season, cleaned the courthouse, furnished water, and kept the fires on court days.¹³⁹ Richard complained against¹⁴⁰

... the occupancy by Peter B. Bradley of a part of the publick property donated by him to the County for the Uses in the Deed Mentioned and prayed the Court to take the same into their consideration which the Court declined Considering at this time and ordered that the said remonstrance and protest be filed and preserved by the Clerk.

It is evident that Richard was concerned about his property rights. He kept a sharp eye on his boundary lines. In August, 1799, he filed suit against Henry Harman¹⁴¹

for breaking and entering the plaintiff’s close, cutting his timber and Digging his Soil.

He furthered complained that Harman:

...with force and arms broke and entered the close of the said plaintiff and his Grass ... there growing with their feet by walking trod down and consumed and his trees ... there growing cut down took away and his soil then dug up and injured whereby the plaintiff lost the benefit of his soil for a long time lost and other outrages ...

Harman failed to appear. A survey was ordered to determine the true boundary between them, and though Richard’s claim to the ownership of the one acre in contention was upheld, there was no final judgment until 1806 when a jury awarded Richard 1¢ damages and \$62.02 costs. Harman was a tenant of Francis Adams, a justice and resident of Centreville¹⁴² who had purchased 486 acres in 1793 from the heirs of Benjamin Grayson, land now occupied by George Mason University and the subdivisions of George Mason Forest, Hickory Farms, and Patriot Square.¹⁴³ In Richard’s trespass suit against Harman, Adams ordered a survey by which he lost 19 acres, cut off by the Ravensworth line.¹⁴⁴ Ratcliffe and Adams eventually mended fences. In 1808, Richard, as jail inspector, let the building of a new jail to

the lowest bidder.¹⁴⁵ During construction, a temporary jail was needed. Adams procured a house for the purpose in Centreville, at \$66.66 rent.¹⁴⁶

Another of Richard's neighbors, Mary Ellzey, widow of Lewis Ellzey, lived on land to the south of James Halley, now occupied by the Brecon Ridge subdivision. She made her will in 1788 and died in 1791, leaving to her son Thomazin Ellzey the land "whereon I now live."¹⁴⁷ Richard was a witness to the will. Mary's husband Lewis, in his will of 1786,¹⁴⁸ had strong words for his son-in-law Benjamin Grayson, who had married his daughter Stacy and fathered her four children: Anna, Sarah, Susannah, and Benjamin. Lewis entrusted his land to Thomazin:

to prevent Benjamin Grayson the Elder, husband of the said Stacy from committing waste thereon or receiving and embezzling the profits thereof in case he should ever return to his wife and Family.

Between 1788 and 1791, Richard acquired the interests of Stacy's four children in part of Lewis Ellzey's land.¹⁴⁹ Thomazin Ellzey, Fairfax County surveyor from about 1783 until 1787, was cited by the court in 1786 for neglect of duty when he refused to produce the surveyor's books and have them examined.¹⁵⁰ He refused for twenty-two years. An entry in the record for February 16, 1808 states:¹⁵¹

Richard Ratcliffe, William Deneale, and John C. Hunter, Gents., are appointed to demand and receive from Thomazin Ellzey formerly Surveyor of this County, the Surveyors Books, plots and all other papers relating thereto now in his possession, and that they hold the same in their possession, subject to the future order of the Court.

No record has been found to show that Thomazin surrendered the surveyors books before his death in 1817.¹⁵²

Caleb Earpe, a former deputy sheriff^{153a} who kept a store on Richard's land opposite the courthouse lot, died unmarried and without issue, late in 1799.^{153b} The store was the forerunner of the brick tavern which would become a valuable source of income for the Ratcliffe family. Earpe's will, dated 1793, witnessed by Richard and his half-brother John Moxley,¹⁵⁴ was probated on April 22nd, the second day court was held in the new courthouse. Richard was appointed to administer Earpe's estate.¹⁵⁵ Though he posted a \$4000 bond to inventory all Earpe's goods,¹⁵⁶ no inventory was recorded. Earpe, evidently, was a lax businessman; before the end of 1801, Richard had filed more than forty suits to collect debts due Earpe's store.¹⁵⁷ Those owing Earpe had to pay Ratcliffe, who owned all the land, and controlled all the business opportunities, in the vicinity of the courthouse.

In 1803, Richard was appointed a commissioner, with Charles Little, James Wren, William Payne, and David Stuart, to prepare a plan for a poor-house with an estimate of probable expenses, on fifty acres of land sold to the county by Nicholas Fitzhugh for the purpose.¹⁵⁸ Richard, now a master commissioner of the court,¹⁵⁹ rising in the political and social circles which dominated county affairs, had replaced George Minor who had died earlier in 1803.^{160a} The poorhouse was built for \$2500 and Richard received \$10 for his services. The property is now the site of Fairfax Square.

The courthouse and nearby tavern on the site of Earpe's store, and the post office established April 7, 1802 with Richard's son John Ratcliffe as postmaster,^{160b} provided the nucleus of the village which would soon become the county seat. But road conditions were still hazardous and travel to the courthouse was a serious problem. Timothy J. Hills, in his study of Northern Virginia trade routes, states:¹⁶¹

During the eighteenth century's closing years travelers coming from the distant counties of Loudoun, Frederick, Jefferson, Shenandoah, and Berkeley still suffered long, tiring, and expensive journeys. Disgruntled and anxious residents of these western counties had yet to see significant improvements to any trade route leading to Alexandria ... their foremost hope for a water connection between northwestern Virginia's isolated farms and Alexandria's port seemed no longer an option following the Potomac Company's 1796 abandonment of the Shenandoah River improvements and the failure of its successor, the Shenandoah Company ... A faction of northern Virginians decidedly against pursuit of water improvements initiated the Fairfax and Loudoun Turnpike Company.

But the turnpike company failed, unable to sell the six hundred and fifty shares required by its charter. The Virginia General Assembly, while assisting the river improvement company, offered the turnpike company no similar support. Other older turnpike roads were in constant need of repair. Hills states:¹⁶²

Turnpike commissioners found themselves deeper in debt as declining tolls did not even pay for maintenance already rendered ... At [a] meeting held in May, 1801, county representatives undoubtedly vented years of anger and frustrations. The product of this public forum was a petition drafted by residents of Frederick, Shenandoah, Berkeley, and Loudoun counties praying that relief from the region's terrible highways should come in the form of a new private turnpike road. This was the birth of the Little River Turnpike Company which took its first tenuous breath January 28, 1802. In Spring 1802 ... commission-

ers representing the six northern Virginia counties stretching from the Potomac into the Shenandoah Valley, commenced the uncertain task at which just a few years earlier their Fairfax and Loudoun Turnpike Company predecessors had failed. The state allowed the ... commissioners one year from March 1, 1802 to sell ... two hundred shares, elect officers, subscribe an additional two hundred shares, and determine the most advantageous route.

Unfortunately for the turnpike company, the Potomac Company at last completed its system of locks around Great Falls. River travel could successfully compete with overland routes, arriving at Alexandria in less time and at lower cost. But this advantage¹⁶³

...was restricted to high-water times, which amounted to as few as thirty-three days of the year. In addition, the bulk of Potomac River traffic originated from farms within ten miles-a-day's drive of that river, leaving isolated the residents of much of northern Virginia's interior and the Shenandoah Valley.

Wagons still remained the most efficient method for transporting flour from the interior of the state to Alexandria, and wagons needed dependable roads. The Little River Turnpike Company sold its shares for \$100 each, with only \$10 down, and soon sold its initial two hundred shares required by its charter. Hills states:¹⁶⁴

The Virginia General Assembly originally authorized a total capital stock of only \$40,000 for the Little River Turnpike Company, less than one-fifth the amount of Virginia's earlier proposed turnpike. Such a low ceiling could finance a road of only minimal improvement. Whereas the Fairfax and Loudoun company charter detailed plans for a highly improved roadway fifty feet wide including a twenty-one foot paved section known as an "artificial road," the act of 1802 required only that the Little River Turnpike Company construct a thirty-foot-wide roadway, paved only at its worst spots ... By an act passed January 20, 1803, the General Assembly authorized the company to increase its capital by as much as fifty thousand dollars, and to construct a roadway to a width of fifty feet including a twenty-foot paved section.

As to the route of the Little River Turnpike,¹⁶⁵

the state set the points of commencement and termination and instructed the company to choose the shortest line between those fixed points.

It was to commence at the stone bridge, on Duke Street extended through West End, and to terminate at the ford of the Little River, in Loudoun County,

there to connect with the Eastern Ridge Road over the Blue Ridge. A bitter argument arose over whether to improve an existing road through Centreville, the “southern” route, or establish a new route to the north to pass by the courthouse. Centreville residents feared their town would suffer economic damage if a new road were to be cut to the north. There was also concern that Valley produce might be sent to Richmond or Fredericksburg, cutting into the Alexandria market, if the southern route to the port city was not enhanced. But to accommodate farmers in Jefferson, Berkeley, and Loudoun counties who had tried for years to improve the route to Alexandria, and to lure them away from trading their produce in Baltimore and Philadelphia, the northern route was favored by three of the company’s most influential directors: John Thomas Ricketts, Leven Powell, Jr., and Charles Simms. Hills states:¹⁶⁶

On November 9 [1803], the Little River Turnpike Company’s internal dispute intensified. On that day at a company meeting held in Alexandria, a stockholders’ majority presented a petition demanding the decision over the route’s location be postponed in lieu of more definitive information. In addition, the election of officers scheduled for December concerned petitioners. Rather, they desired the decision be put off until after the election. The ensuing events surprised everyone.

Directors Ricketts, Powell, and Simms - the northern route advocates - voted to disregard the stockholders’ petition and proceed with the vote on the course of the road. Because they formed a majority, President [James] Keith and Director [George] Gilpin had no alternative but to concede to their wishes. By the same three-two alignment, the company officers favored the route via the new courthouse.

Though Keith and Gilpin were enraged over the success of this tactic, surveyor Simon Summers determined that in fact the northern route was three miles shorter than the southern route, that it traversed more level ground, required only four bridges as opposed to eight for the southern route, and offered better access to stone suitable for construction.¹⁶⁷

Work on the road was already under way, and by December of 1803 the turnpike had advanced four miles from the stone bridge over Hooff’s Run. Hills states:¹⁶⁸

Construction of the opening section had begun in the spring of 1803 and ranged from the Duke Street bridge to Trough Hill. Eliminating the likelihood of labor shortages, the state allowed the turnpike company to call as many tithables as necessary to complete the job ... According to the Little River Turnpike charter, the company could call laboring tithables to work only on that part of the road lying within

three miles of their homes. It defined laboring tithables as males above the age of sixteen but excluded millers, ferrykeepers, ironworks owners, and major slaveholders.

Hills further states:¹⁶⁹

As construction continued into less populated areas, the company experienced labor shortages since residents living more than three miles from the construction site could not be called for statute labor. Consequently, it contracted slave labor. There is no indication that slaves helped build the first four miles but for the next section there is no question that they did. In December 1803, the company's contractor wished to hire for the upcoming year twenty "Able-bodied Negro Men," making the promise that "Good usage to, and punctual payment for their services may be relied on."

One negro who would not be available to work on the turnpike was Luke, slave of Lucilla Ecton of Kentucky. In December 1803, Luke was tried in Fairfax County and found guilty of the rape of Lucy Ann Steele.¹⁷⁰ Richard Ratcliffe was related to the Steeles through his aunt Elizabeth, sister of his father John. He gave his consent for a gallows to be erected on his racefield, from which Luke was to be "hanged by the neck until he is dead, dead, dead" ... on Wednesday, February 8, 1804, between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

In the same year, the Little River Turnpike Company ran out of money. Delinquent stockholders were asked to pay up, or to make advances on what they still owed. More shares were sold and Richard was probably a purchaser. A passage in his will states:¹⁷¹

...my road stock I give to my Grandsons, Francis F. Ratcliffe, Richard John Daniel, Charles Jackson, Robert Ratcliffe and Richard Ratcliffe, 2 shares each.

The Little River Turnpike Company was saved from bankruptcy, and the first ten-mile section was opened for traffic in December 1806.¹⁷² It is likely that, as the completed section approached within three miles of his land, Richard offered his slaves as contract laborers. Because his land stretched along the route for three miles, Richard's slaves may have built a nine-mile section of the road.¹⁷³

As the turnpike approached, the town which Richard had long envisioned became a reality. On January 14, 1805, the Virginia Assembly passed an act establishing a town on the land of Richard Ratcliffe named Providence.¹⁷⁴ With the help of his son Robert, a deputy county surveyor, Rich-

ard laid off nineteen half-acre lots on fourteen acres,¹⁷⁵ part of 1000 acres of the Ravensworth tract which Richard had purchased in 1797,¹⁷⁶ and 102 acres he purchased in 1792.¹⁷⁷ The streets were to be fifty feet wide, the same as the turnpike. The lots measured eight poles by ten poles^{178a} in four-lot "squares" of two acres each. An exception was lot No.1 which was eight poles by twenty, or one acre, on which Richard kept a tavern and stable conveniently located across the turnpike from the courthouse. All the lots were to be sold at public auction except lot No.1, "now in the occupancy of Richard Ratcliffe," and lots No. 2 and 3. Though Providence was officially established in 1805, Richard had laid out the town and promoted the area for business investment long before then. An advertisement in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* in 1800 mentions lots available on ground rent "forever" and provides clear evidence that Richard was preparing for a boom:^{178b}

**THE TAVERN
of
FAIRFAX COUNTY COURT HOUSE
TO LET**

I wish to rent for one or more years, to a person or persons able and qualified to keep it, the BRICK HOUSE erected for a Tavern at this place. I am now making some additional improvements which will be compleated in a few weeks. The house is large and well calculated for the purpose, as will be the stable, to which are adding sheds on each side, that will hold 48 horses, with a very large quantity of hay. To the Brick house will be added a large piazza, the full length, etc.

The ad goes on to describe other properties already built and ready for occupancy:

Also to Rent at the same place,
A HOUSE CALCULATED FOR A STORE,
with Store and counting rooms, and a Cellar under the whole, This has been heretofore considered as a suitable place for a store, but has now become much more so, from the public buildings having been erected therat ...

Also to Rent,
A DWELLING HOUSE, KITCHEN AND STABLE,
with a Lot of two Acres inclosed, situate on the turnpike road [Braddock] within one and a quarter of a mile from this place - the lot is rich and the buildings new and convenient, and will suit a Mechanic, or for the purpose of entertainment ...

Richard also appealed to tradesmen such as shoemakers, saddlers, blacksmiths, and touted the area as well suited for a tanyard, there being in the vicinity a “never failing stream.”

Why did Richard name the town Providence rather than Ratcliffe’s Crossroads, for example, which would have ensured a place in Fairfax County history for the Ratcliffe name? Perhaps he felt a need for divine guidance in planning the town, or perhaps the name expressed his hope that the town would prosper and bring him financial success. Richard worried about money. He had serious concerns about the solvency of his children, and expressed these concerns in his will:¹⁷⁹

I desire all my just debts be paid as soon as practicable which are considerable, being occasioned by advances for children, more particularly John. The monies due to me from H. Marshall, John Maddux and James Allison will nearly square off and as it would be difficult for John Ratcliffe to pay me or my estate back the money I have paid for him I release all he owes me, conditioned that my estate never is bound to pay any more for him for defaults of him as deputy sheriff - my son Samuel being indebted & nothing to pay with, having conducted himself badly for several years past I request that my executors as soon as they can, by rents of houses, etc., do pay what he owes, which I give him, in hopes he will do better hereafter ...

In 1809, Richard had deeded property to his son John, who was evidently a gambler.¹⁸⁰ The deed was not ordered to be recorded until 1842,¹⁸¹ but it has not been found. John predeceased his father in 1818, leaving a widow Lucinda (daughter of Thomas Fitzhugh), son Francis, and daughters Charlotte and Ann.¹⁸² In 1811, Richard divided most of his Ravensworth lands between his sons Samuel and Robert.¹⁸³ Samuel was in poor health and beset by creditors. In 1818, a judgment was obtained against him by Gordon Allison for \$400 which was never paid.¹⁸⁴ Richard had posted bond for Samuel “to avoid a close confinement within the jail.” In 1827, after Richard’s death Samuel was confined by the sheriff within the prison bounds, though not in the jail, for the debt still owed to the firm of Gordon and Robert Allison, and for default on the bond. Samuel demanded that his brother Robert, as executor of their father, pay any money owed, as Richard had made provision in his will, dated 1815, for the payment of Samuel’s debts. Robert countered that only those debts contracted by Samuel prior to 1815 were covered by the will, that he had already paid about \$1400 toward the debts for which their father had become bound, and that Richard had paid Samuel’s debts in amount of \$13,000. In any case, he stated,

Samuel's debts could not be paid from Richard's estate for at least four or five years

...the debts for which the said Richard's estate are now liable and most of them for Samuel, will take all the funds appropriated for that purpose, for that time being the rents of houses, etc...

Richard's daughters, Patsy Coleman, Nancy W. Daniel, Locian Gunnell, Penelope Jackson, and Jane Moss, also seemed to mismanage money. Though Richard provided for them generously in his will, allotting to them most of his Providence town lots, their heirs had to sell these properties to pay the debts of their estates.¹⁸⁵

Richard's generosity was not limited to his children. His will mentions

my old friend Mr. James Connelly who is to have his board and such clothes as he shall reasonably want ... I request that my friend Mr. James Connelly be friendly dealt by and provided for ...

Was James Connelly related to William Connell, the servant, one third of whose services was allotted to the widow Ann from the estate of her husband Thomas Moxley?

In 1812, the Providence town trustees exposed to public sale "sundry lots or half acres"¹⁸⁶ selling back to Richard for \$4530 lots No.4 through 19. The trustees probably disbanded after the sale. No later mention of them appears in the records. An 1854 entry in the court minutes states:¹⁸⁷

...the Manassas Gap Railroad Company desiring to construct their road through the town of Providence ... and to occupy the street known as North Street, for the purposes of their road, and it appearing to the Court that there is no one with power to administer the law of the Corporation (there being no organization thereof ...)

Providence lacked a political structure: a common council, mayor, and other officials, such as had governed Alexandria since 1780. The court, being the only official body with authority to review the railroad company's petition, gave leave for the company to build its road.

Richard's concept of town planning lacked not only an elected governing body. Though it included spacious building lots for commercial and residential structures, wide streets and major roads, a large tavern and several houses of public and private entertainment, stables, stores, a post office, and the courthouse with its two-acre public lot and well, two other ingredients essential to a healthy community were missing: nearby churches and schools.

As was discussed earlier, the Baptist Meeting at Popeshead was disbanded in 1802, having lost its congregants to other Meetings such as Backlick in 1790 and Frying Pan in 1792. Payne's Church had been attended only sporadically by Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists after the departure of Edward Payne for Kentucky in 1785 and was almost unused until 1840 when the newly formed Jerusalem Baptist Church held services there.¹⁸⁸ William Simpson had deeded more than an acre of ground for a Meeting on the south side of the Ox Road near present-day Burke Lake,¹⁸⁹ and Jeremiah Moore preached in the courthouse, but it was not until 1843 that a church was planned on one of the original lots in the town of Providence, eighteen years after Richard Ratcliffe's death. (See discussion of lot No. 20)

Schools, likewise, were assigned no place in Richard's town. A 1776 survey shows a schoolhouse built by Lewis Sanders, from whom Richard had purchased land in 1792, on the northwest corner of the Ravensworth tract, just north of where Earpe's store was located.¹⁹⁰ Other schoolhouses were built in central Fairfax County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,¹⁹¹ but it was not until about 1846, when Dr. Frederick Baker opened his private academy for young ladies, Coombe Cottage, adjoining Zion (now Truro) Episcopal Church on the north side of the Little River Turnpike west of lot No.1 that a school was established in the village.¹⁹² In that year, too, the court divided the county into school districts, in accordance with an act of the Virginia legislature amending the existing primary school system and appointed commissioners for the twenty-two districts.¹⁹³ The village of Providence was included in district No. 9 with Thomas R. Love, commissioner. (A brick schoolhouse, built in 1873, still stands in its original location on the south side of the Little River Turnpike, now the Fairfax Museum and Visitors Center.)¹⁹⁴

Clearly, Richard established Providence primarily as a commercial venture, with residences secondary to business structures. He intended to maintain ownership of the town lots and to control the businesses and dwellings on them, anticipating that Providence, with its courthouse and modern turnpike, would very quickly become the social and commercial focus of the county as was Alexandria for more than a century. To secure his children's financial futures, and his own, Richard preferred to lease out the lots on ground rent forever, thereby assuring a steady income. He required the lessee to improve the lot, usually specifying they build "a dwelling house at least sixteen feet square with a stone or brick chimney."¹⁹⁵ In the 1820 lease to William Harman for lot No. 19 at \$35 per year, Harman was required to:¹⁹⁶

repair and fit up all the necessary buildings, vatts, etc. proper for the carrying on the trade and mistery of a tanner, and carry on the said business in a respectable and proper manner ...

Richard also limited the use of the lot by the tenant, stating in some of the leases, for example, that "no tavern, house of private entertainment for travellers or others..." could be kept by the lessee for ten years, or other specified period of time, under penalty of \$100 additional rent for each year in violation. A quarter-acre lot leased to Dr. Simeon Draper in 1821 at \$20 per year was under a \$200 per year penalty.¹⁹⁷ Richard's estate account lists his renters and the amount due him from rental of his properties at the time of his death.¹⁹⁸

Perhaps no records illustrate Richard's desire to regulate commerce in Providence as clearly as do two suits in chancery filed in the town of Fredericksburg, in 1816 and 1827.¹⁹⁹ The 1816 suit states that James Allison, the plaintiff, entered into an agreement with Richard Ratcliffe July 29, 1812, whereby Allison was to take possession of part of lot No. 8

six poles on front on the Little River Turnpike road of the lot on which the said Richard Ratcliffe was then building at Fairfax Court House ...

Allison was to pay \$250 current money. The agreement stated that Allison

... also rents of said Ratcliffe the new Brick house now finishing for twelve months from the time of its being prepared for reception - but is to be at liberty to give up said house in six months after giving the said Ratcliffe three months notice thereof in which case the rent after sd six months to cease - Rent of said House to be one hundred and eighty dollars for one year or in that proportion - Penalty on either party failing, five hundred dollars ... said Allison is to have the use of the Brick yard and to dig Earth to make 50,000 bricks adjacent thereto and to turn the water on said yard to clay-hole to temper etc...

Agreeing also that no tavern would be kept on the lot, Allison took possession

of the said Lot and has at great expense erected a valuable brick store and dwelling house and other improvements thereon ...

Though he had not gotten a deed from Richard, Allison conveyed his interest in the lot to Hugh Smith of Alexandria, stating

...your orator being at that time an alien and incapable of holding real estate in Virginia ...

Smith, in January 1813, gave Richard a deed to execute, with the price stipulated, but Richard refused to sign. When Allison later became a United States citizen and annulled his arrangement with Smith, he again asked Richard for a deed, offering to pay the purchase price. Richard once again refused to accept the money or to give Allison a deed. Allison insisted that neither he, nor any of his family, meaning his brothers Gordon, Robert, and William,

would have anything to do with a Tavern or anything of the kind, and that he would not have the Tavern Richard Ratcliffe owned at the Court House as a Gift.

He wanted the lot, he said, to erect a store house and dwelling only. James Allison, with his brother Gordon, posted bond of \$1000

that no Tavern shall be built or kept on the premises referred to for the Term of Seven years ...

This restriction was to include any house of public entertainment, livery stable, or boarding house. Yet Richard still refused to execute a deed. He explained, in his answer to Allison's bill of complaint, his reasons why. It had come to his attention, through the reports of his other tenants who kept licensed houses of entertainment and taverns in the village, that the Allisons were furnishing to travelers and others "feed for man and horse, and liquor," underselling the licensed taverns and injuring their business.

Depositions were taken of witnesses at several locations: William P. Richardson's tavern at Fairfax Court House (probably Ratcliffe's), Strother's tavern in Alexandria, Mrs. Matilda Farr's house at Fairfax Court House, and Mr. Robert Lindsay's new building in Fluvanna County, Virginia. Statements were taken from bricklayers, lumbermen, tavern keepers and others who had knowledge of the events occurring on lot No. 8. According to testimony, Richard built two brick, one log, and one frame house at Providence for upwards of \$10,000 and rented them out to licensed tavern keepers. His large brick tavern opposite the courthouse, built several years before the town was established, rented for \$500 per year. In 1812, John Maddux kept this tavern. Richard's total income from rents was about \$1340 per year, \$800 of which came from taverns.

Matilda Farr stated she had kept a licensed tavern at Providence since 1812. She testified that the Allisons resided in the house they built on the lot, "furnishing eating, drinking and horse feed," that they were unlicensed and hurt her trade. She also stated that Gordon Allison had boarded at her

house, claiming to be in the weaving business and trying to get Richard to sell him a lot. She suspected him of deception.

Drummond Wheeler, a contractor who was building a second brick house for Richard, stated that on or about October 21, 1812, he was called on by James Allison to go to the house of Francis Hague at Providence to witness a deed Richard was about to execute to Allison. Richard read the deed aloud. When he came to the clause providing that no tavern be kept on the lot, Allison objected, saying he wanted no conditions, even though he had previously agreed. Richard then offered to pay Allison for the improvements he had made and to forfeit the \$500, but Allison refused the offer. Wheeler also commented that Allison's kiln made very poor bricks, that it had to be taken down and many of the bricks reburnt before they could be used in his building.

George Millan, in his deposition of April 3, 1818, stated he had seen persons eating and drinking in the Allison house, and horses on the lot. He also asserted that James and Gordon Allison were partners in the store, and other tavern keepers who rented from Richard Ratcliffe complained that the Allisons undersold them and hurt their business. Kenelum Barker, another witness, agreed, stating that the Allisons furnished food and drink to travelers "by the small" from their house on lot No. 8. John Ratcliffe concurred, saying that the Allisons sold

crackers and cheese, and whiskey by the pint but not drank in the house but outside the door, but on the lot.

Robert Lindsay, a carpenter, stated he had done all the woodwork on two brick houses built by Richard Ratcliffe at Providence in 1812. The first was the brick store house rented by James Allison as soon as it was ready. Gordon and James made bricks on the part of the lot previously occupied by John Maddux as a garden.

The most detailed testimony was given by Gordon Allison January 20, 1818 at William P. Richardson's tavern at Providence. Gordon stated that Richard Ratcliffe agreed to have his son Robert Ratcliffe lay off to James Allison a part of lot No. 8, and that Richard assisted in driving the corner stakes. Gordon said that he occupied a house at Providence rented by James Allison from Ratcliffe, and that he had superintended the buildings on the lot James had purchased, from the digging of the clay out of the cellar to make brick until the building was finished. He stated that Richard lived within a half mile of the lot and was present during the digging of the clay and the making and burning of the bricks and never objected to any of the

operations. Gordon stated that, as agent for Hugh Smith, he was authorized to offer Richard \$250 for the lot, in gold eagles and half eagles, but Richard refused. Gordon also claimed that he was not an interested party, but a year-to-year tenant on the lot in dispute.

Richard objected to Gordon giving testimony, stating that he

considers him the said Gordon Allison to be an Incompetent and Illegitimate Evidence in any and all respects Relative thereto ...

Richard also stated that James Allison was indebted to his brother William Allison, that William might acquire rights to the lot and sell to Gordon.

From the depositions it is clear that James and Gordon Allison were partners in a brick store house and tavern on their part of lot No. 8, that they violated an agreement with Richard Ratcliffe not to keep a tavern, for which Richard refused to accept their offer of \$250 or to give them a deed. However, the Fredericksburg court ruled, on May 11, 1819, that Richard convey the lot to James Allison upon Allison's paying the purchase price plus interest. Richard was to pay costs. He appealed, but the ruling of the lower court was upheld. Before a settlement was reached, James Allison died, intestate and insolvent, leaving John and William, his two infant sons, as his heirs at law. His brother Gordon brought into the partnership another brother, Robert, and together they operated the store and tavern on the lot. Richard continued to pay the annual taxes of between \$6 and \$9 until his own death in 1825 when the lot, still unconveyed, descended to his heirs. By that time, Richard's heirs were: Robert, Samuel, Charles, John's children (Francis F., Charlotte F., and Ann Maria the wife of Thomas W. Coleman of Loudoun County), Penelope Jackson, Jane Moss, Nancy W. Daniel's children (Richard J., William S., Jane P., Robert R., and Julia Ann the wife of Alexander Foote of Prince William County), Patsy Coleman, and Locian Gunnell.

In the suit filed by William Allison of Richmond, brother of James, Gordon, and Robert Allison, in 1827, against Richard's heirs, William stated that in 1817 he had made an agreement with James and Gordon to buy the lot and improvements for \$4000, Gordon to pay him \$350 annual rent beginning September 1, 1817:

in part of the interest on a mercantile concern - and the Stocks etc. which the said James and your orator had conducted in partnership which sum was credited the said James and left a large balance due your orator and still unpaid.

William claimed that the lot was given up to him and that he now holds it and wants a deed. He asked if he had to pay the \$250 original purchase price, and if so, his costs should be deducted from it. Robert Ratcliffe, as executor of Richard, was willing to convey the lot if William would pay the purchase price plus interest and taxes. The court ruled that Richard's heirs convey the property to William Allison. This was done September 30, 1828, sixteen years after Richard had agreed to sell the lot to James Allison.²⁰⁰

Ultimately, Richard's plan to achieve financial security for himself and his children through the control and rental of his town lots bore less-than-hoped-for results. That Richard was disappointed in the growth of Providence is supported by an ad which he placed in the *Alexandria Gazette* on May 4, 1819, fourteen years after the town was established, when Richard was about sixty-seven years old. He addressed the ad to tradesmen of all types: wheelwrights, blacksmiths, tanners, hatters, saddlers, harness-makers and the like:²⁰¹

Believing as I do, that Providence, at Fairfax Courthouse, would be a suitable situation for mechanics of the above description, I offer to such, lots in that village for sale, on ground rent forever - will build and furnish suitable houses and rent to them, or furnish brick to them to build with; and invite any who feel disposed to settle there, for the purpose of carrying on their respective trades to advantage, to come and view the situation. It is a very public place, the centre of the county, where the superior and county courts are held. The Little River Turnpike Road passes thru this little town from Alexandria westward, and where all the public meetings for the county are held and where trades of the aforesaid description being carried on, would meet with great encouragement, and be a public convenience to the country around. No situation can be more healthy - good water, and fire wood cheap.

Why was Providence not the success Richard had envisioned? Did the lack of nearby churches and schools, or the dust and confusion from dozens of wagons traveling daily through the village to and from Alexandria, discourage settlement? Did people mistrust a town not governed by an elected council but owned by one man? Were his leases too restrictive? Whatever the reasons, Richard's disappointment, and his children's debts, affected his personality in later years. In his sixties, Richard was charged several times with drunkenness. In 1814, he was fined \$1.67 for being drunk and 83¢ for profane swearing.²⁰² On more than one occasion, the clerk noted in the court minutes that Commissioner Ratcliffe was drunk while performing his duties.²⁰³ Richard was sued several times for debt and judg-

ments were obtained against him.²⁰⁴ In October 1820, at age sixty-eight, he was fined for assault and battery, although he claimed that the other fellow hit him first.²⁰⁵

In spite of these problems, Richard continued his court duties. In 1822, at the age of seventy, he was appointed to survey the disputed lands of Robert Carter, deceased, and to divide them into nine equal parts among the heirs.²⁰⁶ He was paid \$24 for fifteen days' work. But on September 20, 1825, the clerk noted in the court minutes that Commissioner Ratcliffe was extremely ill.²⁰⁷ In fact, on that day he died.²⁰⁸ His wife Locian followed him less than a year later.²⁰⁹ Though no tombstones remain to mark their graves, Richard and Locian are probably buried in the two-acre Ratcliffe family cemetery in the City of Fairfax between Keith, Moore, Railroad and Oliver Streets, about a half mile from the courthouse.²¹⁰

Richard's obituary, published in the *Alexandria Gazette* September 27, 1825, reads:

DIED

On the 20th inst. at his seat of Mount Vinyard in Fairfax County, Richard Ratcliffe Esq. in the 74th year of his age. He has left an affectionate wife, 8 children, 40 grand children, and 5 great grand children to lament their irreparable loss. He was a kind husband and father, a good neighbor and master, and devoted many years of his life to the public, as sheriff, magistrate, &c. which offices were faithfully filled.

In the 1812 sale of the town lots by the trustees, lots No. 8 through No. 15 were already built upon, and the remaining lots were to be improved within fourteen years.²¹¹ Lots No. 1 through No. 3 evidently comprised the "acre" occupied by Richard Ratcliffe, containing the tavern, stables, and other buildings, excepted from the sale. Lots No. 20 through No. 27 were probably added after Richard's death.

Many of Richard's leases for his town lots do not identify the lot by number or location, or were unrecorded. In 1823, Richard conveyed to Hiram Carver, for \$35 annual rent forever, half of a half-acre lot and "the house lately occupied by Thomas Penfield."²¹² No location is given except that it is on Fairfax Street. Carver's relinquishment of the lease in 1825 offers no additional clues.²¹³ No lease to Penfield was recorded.

Lewis S. Prichartt kept a tavern at Fairfax Court House in the 1840's though no lease was recorded. A Mr. and Mrs. Hays, their children, and a servant boarded at Pritchatt's tavern in 1844.²¹⁴ No precise location is given, but an entry in the 1848 court minutes states that Rezin Willcoxen was to open North Street behind his lot "and in rear of Pritchatt's stable."²¹⁵

In the 1833 chancery suit *Moss, etc, vs. Ratcliffe's executor*,²¹⁶ reference is made to "the bricks of the Tavern destroyed by Fire." No location for this tavern is given in the suit. There is also reference to rental of the "large tavern house" by W. P. Richardson for the years 1828-1835, but again no location is given, though it most probably was the tavern opposite the courthouse.

Division of the town lots among Richard's daughters and daughters' heirs was not accomplished until 1836 when the town was resurveyed by order of the court. Commissioners were appointed to make the division according to lot value. The division, recorded in 1850, was as follows:²¹⁷

The heirs of Jane Moss - No. 3, 24, and the east half of No.1

The heirs of Nancy W. Daniel - No.13, 14, 17, 20, and the west half of No.11

The heirs of Locian Gunnell - No. 2, 7, 15, 18, 22, the east half of No. 12, and the west half of No. 1

Patsy Coleman - No. 4, 5, 19, 26, and the west half of No.10

Penelope Jackson - No. 6, 9, 16, 21, 23, 25, 27, and the east half of No.11

The value given for each lot in the division provides a strong clue to the improvements on the lot. Distance from the courthouse, evidently, was also a factor. The east half of lot No.1, for example, was valued at \$1200. Lot No. 4 was valued at \$900 but the adjoining lot No. 5 was valued at \$50. Lots No. 24, 25, 26, and 27, the farthest south from the courthouse, were valued at \$30 each.²¹⁸ All the town lots were allotted in the division among Richard's daughters except lot No. 8, the east half of lot No.10, and the west half of lot No.12.

By Richard's will, his sons Robert, John, Samuel, and Charles were to have

the brick store house and lott and Hagues house and that half his lott next to Payne Street ...

for the purpose of keeping stores. No lease to Hague has been found. The brick store house and Hague's house and lot were unidentified as to location in the town, except that Hague's was somewhere on Payne Street.

The east half of lot No.10 was conveyed by Richard Ratcliffe and wife Locian to Henry Logan in 1812²¹⁹ and by Logan and wife Sarah to Hugh Smith.²²⁰ Hugh Smith and wife Elizabeth of the District of Columbia (probably Alexandria) conveyed to Gordon and Robert Allison June 30, 1820²²¹

<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Allotted to</u>	<u>Value</u>
1 (east half)	heirs of Jane Moss, dec'd.	\$1200
1 (west half)	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	400
2	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	50
3	heirs of Jane Moss, dec'd.	150
4	Patsy Coleman	900
5	Patsy Coleman	50
6	Penelope Jackson	100
7	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	100
8 (west four poles)	reserved in Richard Ratcliffe's will to sons Robert, John, Samuel, and Charles (brick store house)	
9	Penelope Jackson	600
10 (east half)	sold by Richard Ratcliffe to Henry Logan in 1812	
10 (west half)	Patsy Coleman	250
11 (Mrs. Draper's east half)	Penelope Jackson	250
11 (west half)	heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, dec'd.	250
12 (east half)	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	400
12 (west half)	reserved in Richard Ratcliffe's will to sons Robert, John, Samuel, and Charles (Hague's lott)	
13	heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, dec'd.	600
14	heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, dec'd.	300
15	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	250
16	Penelope Jackson	250
17	heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, dec'd.	125
18	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	125
19	Patsy Coleman	200
20	heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, dec'd.	100
21	Penelope Jackson	50
22	heirs of Locian Gunnell, dec'd.	50
23	Penelope Jackson	50
24	heirs of Jane Moss, dec'd.	40
25	Penelope Jackson	30
26	Patsy Coleman	30
27	Penelope Jackson	30

... half of the half acre lott No 10 which said piece of a lot of ground was conveyed by Richard Ratcliffe and Locian his wife to Henry Logan ...

A month after William Allison was deeded part of lot No. 8 by Robert Ratcliffe in 1828, he deeded the property to Gordon and Robert Allison.²²² Following the firm's bankruptcy, William regained possession of the six poles in 1843 from James Gordon Allison, a nephew, who had acquired the lot at a commissioner's sale.²²³ For \$4550 William received part of the east half of lot No.10 and the Allison store and tavern lot, described as

one lot beginning on the Little River Turnpike road on the east corner of the lot on which Richard Ratcliffe, dec'd. was building in 1812, and extending thence on said road westwardly for quantity six poles ...

The remaining part of the east half of lot No.10 was sold in two parcels, one by Robert J. Taylor and Thomas R. Love, trustees, December 20, 1837 to Henry Taylor for \$500.50, containing two small brick tenements on the north side of the Little River Turnpike²²⁴

being part of the lot conveyed by Hugh Smith and wife to Gordon and Robert Allison June 30, 1820.

The second parcel was sold by James Gordon Allison to Lawson T. Thompson for \$100 June 1, 1840.²²⁵ It was described in the deed as

adjoining the House and lot purchased by Henry Taylor fronting and binding with the turnpike on the south, on the east by H. Taylor's lot, on the south (sic) by the stable lot belonging to the said James Gordon Allison, and on the west by the lot of Mrs. Patsy Coleman ...

James Gordon Allison had purchased the properties from Thomas R. Love, surviving trustee of Gordon and Robert Allison in 1841 for \$4550.²²⁶ Gordon and Robert Allison, merchants, had mortgaged to Robert J. Taylor and Thomas R. Love for debts of the firm²²⁷

all that store, Tavern and lots of Ground on which they are erected or which are used as appurtenant thereto, in the Town of Providence ... situated on the north side of the Little River Turnpike road and all that lot of Ground on the same side of the said road on which are erected two brick and one wooden tenement, and the stables used with the said Tavern, comprehending all the Real Estate of the said Gordon and Robert Allison whether held jointly or severally in the said Town ...

The Allisons had also mortgaged to Thomas J. Murray the store and tavern in 1836.²²⁸

An 1848 deed from Patsy Coleman to Joshua C. Gunnell²²⁹ conveyed lots No. 4 and 5

bounded on the south by the lots of Ann R. Green, William Allison, and Jane Huntt.

Lots No. 4 and 5 are bounded on the south by lots No. 8 and 9. Ann R. Green held lot No. 9, part of her mother Penelope Jackson's allotment in the division of the town lots.²³⁰ Jane Huntt was the widow of Gerrard L. W. Huntt²³¹ who, in 1830, had bought for \$395 all Robert Ratcliffe's interest in and to the brick store house and lot.²³² This would indicate that the brick store house was located on the remaining four poles of lot No. 8, since William Allison held the adjoining six poles.

In 1829, Robert Ratcliffe and wife Mildred [Deneale] made a deed to Rezin Willcoxen²³³ which recites that Robert Ratcliffe acquired the interest of Francis F. Ratcliffe, son of John (deceased), to

two several lots ... with the tenements thereon situated in the Town of Providence and in the occupation of Stephen Murphy, William Harman, and John Beck ...

John's daughter Charlotte F. Helm had conveyed her interest in Hague's lot and the brick store house to Rezin Willcoxen twice, on March 1, 1831 as the wife of Henry P. Helm²³⁴ and again on September 4, 1839 as a single woman.²³⁵ Charlotte also conveyed her interest in ground rent after she became Mrs. Thomas N. Stuart.²³⁶ Robert Ratcliffe's other brothers, Charles and Samuel, who, under their father's will were each to have a one-quarter share in the same lots, sold their interests, Charles to Peter B. Bradley²³⁷ and Samuel to Rezin Willcoxen.²³⁸ Richard, son of Samuel, had acquired the interest of his cousin Richard J. Daniel in his mother Nancy W. Daniel's share of the houses and lots in Providence.²³⁹ Richard, son of Samuel, lost all his interest when he mortgaged to F. D. Richardson in 1836 and defaulted.²⁴⁰

A division was made between Robert Ratcliffe, Peter B. Bradley, and Rezin Willcoxen in 1831.²⁴¹ Ratcliffe and Bradley agreed to take the lot and premises on the north side of the Little River Turnpike called Murphy's lot (Huntt's, on lot No. 8) and Rezin Willcoxen to take the lot on the south side "now occupied by John H. Sweeney and John Beck" (west half of lot No. 12). In the division, Willcoxen's lot

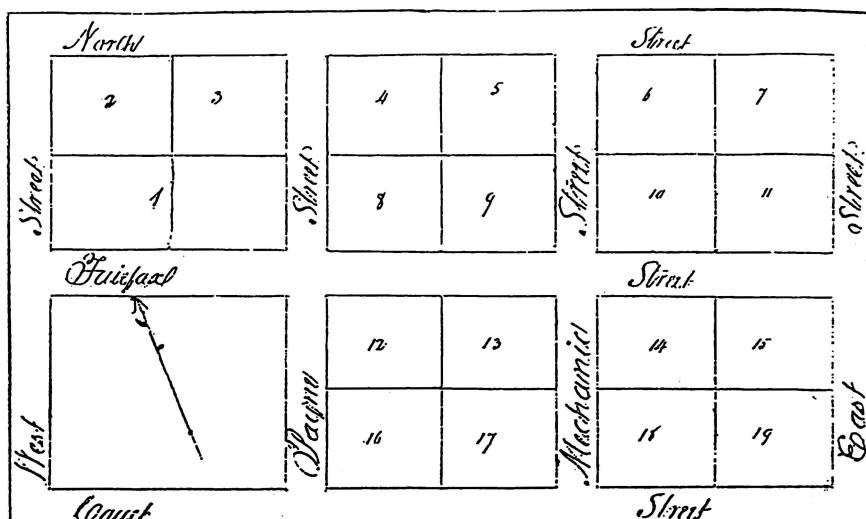
is described in the Last Will and Testament of Richard Ratcliffe, dec'd.
as Hague's lott and situated on Payne Street.

The foregoing transactions place two brick and one wood tenement and stables on the east half of lot No.10, a store and tavern on six poles of lot No. 8, a brick store house on four poles of lot No. 8, Hague's house on the west half of lot No.12, and a tavern, stables, and other buildings on lot No.1 or No. 3 or both, at the time of Richard Ratcliffe's death in 1825. Lots No. 9,11,13,14, and 15 had also been improved by 1812. The values assigned to lots No. 4, 6, 7, 18, 19, and 20 suggest improvements of varying quality at the time of the division in 1836. At that time, it can be assumed that lots No. 2, 5, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 were unimproved, their values not exceeding \$50.

Lots No. 1, 2, 3

In the Act of Assembly of 1805 establishing the town of Providence,
...one acre with an ordinary, stables, and other buildings thereon, now
in the occupancy of Richard Ratcliffe

was excepted from public sale. The suit styled *Moss, etc. vs. Ratcliffe's executor*²⁴² recites that the large tavern in Richard's estate had been rented in 1827 to Major John Bronaugh in 1828-1829 and in 1833-1835 to W. P. Richardson. (We have seen earlier that John Maddux rented the tavern in 1812 and William P. Richardson in 1818.) These buildings were probably on lots No.1 and No. 3.



Plat of the original town of Providence (Fairfax Deed Book M₂;137).

In the division of the lots among Richard's daughters in 1836, the east half of lot No.1, and No. 3 to the north of it, were allotted to the heirs of Jane Moss, deceased. Jane Ratcliffe had married Thomas Moss. They had a daughter Anna M. who married Thomas R. Love, and sons Robert, Thomas, Charles R., Edgar, Armistead T., and John.²⁴³ In 1837, a suit was brought by Thomas R. Love against the other heirs of Jane Moss to sell the lots at public auction.²⁴⁴ The original tavern was gone by this date. An entry in the *Alexandria Gazette* for December 13, 1837, states that commissioner of sale Thomas Moss will sell at public auction on December 18th

the lot on which the brick Tavern formerly stood on the north side of
the Little River Turnpike Road, containing one acre of land ...

By deed dated December 10, 1844, Rezin Willcoxen acquired lot No. 3 and the east half of lot No.1 for \$1001.^{245a} Willcoxen had been a resident of Fairfax County since 1787.^{245b} He, or his son William, rebuilt the tavern.

Depositions were taken at Willcoxen's Tavern as early as 1834.²⁴⁶ William D. Willcoxen, son of Rezin, probably kept a tavern at Providence, leasing from Richard's heirs.²⁴⁷ He was also licensed for an ordinary at his house in 1835²⁴⁸ in the vicinity of Wolf Run Shoals Road and Sandy Run.²⁴⁹ William D. Willcoxen was a school and road commissioner for that area of the county.²⁵⁰ He died in 1849 owning no property in the town at the time of his death.

Rezin Willcoxen's tavern was the meeting place, on June 18, 1844, for road overseers to allot hands to work on the road, six months before the date of his deed.²⁵¹ He may have leased the property before the sale, though no lease was recorded. The tavern at Providence was a part of Rezin Willcoxen's estate when he died in 1855. Rezin's daughter Ann, who had married Sheldon J. Hoag of New York State, was allotted "The Tavern Lot" valued at \$4500 in the division of Rezin's estate.²⁵² The property must have included lots No. 2, 3, and probably all of lot No.1.

Ann Hoag died in 1859, leaving two infant sons, Sheldon R. and Daniel F. Hoag, who inherited the tavern lot. Her husband was appointed guardian of the children, and also held a life estate in her property.²⁵³ Hoag's son-in-law, the husband of Elizabeth, his daughter by a previous wife, may have kept the tavern; an 1856 marriage entry lists her groom George H. Richardson as a hotel keeper.²⁵⁴ James W. Jackson evidently leased the tavern property by 1859,²⁵⁵ though no lease is recorded. Robert Manson Myers, in his Civil War history *The Children of Pride*, recites that James William Jackson (1823-1861), hotel keeper, youngest son of Richard and Jane [Donaldson] Jackson, became proprietor of the Union Hotel in Fairfax Court

House in 1860 (sic).²⁵⁶ Documentation of Jackson's lease is further provided by two advertisements in the *Alexandria Gazette* in July 1860, one week apart:^{257a}

Mr. Jackson will positively sell all the Furniture, etc. of the Union Hotel at Fairfax Court House on Wednesday the 25th inst. The hotel was closed on Wednesday last, in order to arrange the various articles for the sale. Mr. J's relinquishment of the Hotel is greatly regretted by the citizens of the county generally.

Mr. Jackson will offer his unexpired lease of the Hotel at Fairfax Court House, at public sale, on the first day of the August term of the County Court, (Monday, 20th proximo) and sale of the furniture, fixtures, etc. will also be commenced on that day.

In February 1861 Jackson removed to Alexandria to become co-proprietor of the Marshall House Hotel where, in May of the same year, he shot and killed Union officer Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth, and was himself mortally wounded.

Though Sheldon J. Hoag resided in Virginia and had married into a southern family, he remained sympathetic to his northern roots. He was exempted from taxes for the years 1861-1864, a privilege accorded to those loyal to the Union under the provisions of the Ordinance of the Constitutional Convention of Virginia adopted April 8, 1864.^{257b} Hoag's daughter Helen married Henry T. Brooks, the pro-Union Quaker clerk of the court during the Civil War.^{257c} Son Walter B. Hoag served as postmaster at Fairfax Court House from 1862-1865, as did son-in-law Brooks in early 1862.^{257d} Among the docket and rule books housed in the Fairfax Circuit Court Archives, one leather-bound volume contains messages to posterity and the name "Hoag" scrawled in brown ink across its pages, recording the visit to Fairfax of a Schenectady, New York regiment:

Walter B. Hoag this day refuses to do anything not in harmony with the laws of the United States of A.....

Fairfax June 23, 1863

Twenty years from date I promise to pay Jef Davis and crew the debt of treason which is now credited to them.

Uncle Sam

Rebble Gen Lee

May the Devil give him his just reward in the bottomless pit to which place he is a candidate and will surely be elected by an overwhelming majority.

Yankee

In 1866, Sheldon J. Hoag petitioned the court for a sale of the "Hotel lot at Fairfax Court House called the Union Hotel" as the buildings had been damaged in the war.²⁵⁸ The tavern property was sold to Henry B. Tyler who transferred his purchase to his brother C. W. Tyler, trustee for their mother Elizabeth B. Tyler. A deed dated November 21, 1872 was made from commissioner O.W. Hunt to C.W. Tyler, trustee.²⁵⁹ Hunt had replaced Hoag as commissioner of sale after Hoag's death in 1867 in New York State. Ann's two infant sons went to live with a new guardian, Samuel Wingate, in Schenectady, New York.²⁶⁰

The will of Elizabeth B. Tyler, dated March 20, 1880, and recorded at March court 1887, devised to her daughters Elizabeth H. and Laura Tyler and son W. Selden Tyler²⁶¹

the house and lot (and all personal) property in said house and on said lot of whatever nature) situated at Fairfax Court House, Va., which was conveyed to C. W. Tyler in trust for me by deed of November 21, 1872 and September 2, 1867, it being commonly known as the Union Hotel and which I now reside.

W. Selden's interest was to be held in trust by his brother C. W. Tyler for Selden's life. At Elizabeth's death, the hotel was rented to James W. Burke from April 1887 until May 1889,^{262a} and J.H. Troth and Mrs. Mary C. Watkins before it was for rent once again.

Elizabeth B. Tyler's daughter Laura died before her mother without issue. Sons W. Selden and Winfield S. Tyler died after their mother, also without issue. Another daughter, Mrs. Caldwell, died before her mother, leaving five children. The largest share of the tavern property fell to an unmarried daughter, Elizabeth H. Tyler, subject to the claims of the other surviving heirs.²⁶³ Henry B. Tyler asked the court for a sale of the property and a division of the proceeds. A private sale was made April 23, 1895 to T. R. Swetnam for \$3000. Swetnam died before the sale was completed, he having paid \$500, leaving a widow Pattie and two infant children, Charles Randolph Keith and Addie Rebecca Swetnam. Pattie filed suit for a sale of the tavern property.²⁶⁴ In her bill of complaint, she recited that her husband died intestate in May 1895, that she was administratrix of his estate and guardian of their two children. She had completed the purchase of the hotel lot and received a deed.²⁶⁵ Her bill of complaint describes the property:

the fencing around the said Hotel property is in a very dilapidated condition and the Hotel building itself is very much in need of repair.

Pattie asked the court for a sale to James Adams with whom she had an agreement dated July 11, 1895. Adams purchased

the property called the Union Hotel directly across the Little River Turnpike from the Court House

for \$3000 plus interest at 6%. The deed was dated July 14, 1902.²⁶⁶ However, Adams was operating the hotel before then, certainly by June 1900, when the *Fairfax Herald* reported that he was building a porch on the hotel.²⁶⁷ James Adams was a Fairfax town councilman,²⁶⁸ and active on Confederate reunion committees.²⁶⁹

In 1909, James Adams and wife Mary E. sold to R. W. King an entire square in the Town of Fairfax called the Adams Hotel property, formerly known as the Tavern or Union Hotel

bounded by the Little River Turnpike (Fairfax Street), Payne Street (Old Courthouse Road), North Street, and West Street

being the same property conveyed to James Adams by C. V. Ford, commissioner, July 1902 ...

and released to Adams by C. R. K. Swetnam and Addie R. Swetnam August 1909.²⁷⁰ This description indicates that the property purchased by Adams, Swetnam, and Tyler had been a two-acre "square" including the original town lots No. 1, 2, and 3.

After selling the hotel in 1909, James Adams moved to his farm on Braddock Road.²⁷¹

In the division of Richard Ratcliffe's estate, the heirs of his daughter Locian Gunnell, deceased, received lot No. 2 and the west half of lot No.1. Locian was survived by her husband George W. Gunnell and seven children.²⁷² Her daughter Martha A. married Alfred Moss.²⁷³ In the 1840 suit *Alfred Moss and wife vs. George W. Gunnell, etc.*,²⁷⁴ the court ordered the public sale of

the lots in the Town of Providence of which Locian Gunnell, the mother of the plaintiff Martha, died seized and possessed ...

The sale was conducted by commissioners George W. Gunnell and Thomas R. Love.²⁷⁵ An 1854 plat of the route of the Manassas Gap Railroad through the land of Rezin Willcoxon shows the area of lots No. 2 and 3 which were to be taken, and delineates a full "square" bounded by Payne, North, and West Streets, and the Little River Turnpike.²⁷⁶ However, no sale to Willcoxon for lot No. 2 and the west half of No.1 was recorded.

Additional records for lots No.1, 2, and 3 are listed in the notes.²⁷⁷

Lots No. 4 and 5

In the division of Richard Ratcliffe's estate, daughter Patsy Coleman was allotted town lots No. 4, 5, 19, 26, and the west half of No. 10. In 1848, Patsy conveyed to Joshua C. Gunnell for \$1000 lots No. 4 and 5²⁷⁸

Bounded on the north by North street, on the east by Mechanics Street, on the south by the lots of Ann R. Green, William Allison, and Jane Hunt, and on the west by Payne Street, containing one half acre each and was lately occupied by Spencer Jackson.

The property was called the Tavern House, rented by Jackson for \$100 in 1846.²⁷⁹

In 1859, Joshua C. Gunnell and wife Eliza J. sold to Edward R. Ford for \$3500 lots No. 4 and 5.²⁸⁰ This conveyance was subject to any rights the Manassas Gap Railroad Company may have had under an agreement with Gunnell which stated that the railroad company wished to locate and construct their road within sixty feet of Gunnell's dwelling house at Fairfax Court House, and that for \$200 and under certain conditions guaranteeing no additional damage to his property, Gunnell consented.²⁸¹

In 1889, E. R. Ford's heirs (Frank R. Ford and B. B. his wife, Mary E. Ford, C. Vernon Ford and wife Ada M., E. R. F. Wells, Antonia F. Wells, Hollie M. Wells, and Julia F. Wells) sold to R. C. L. Moncure for \$2500 lots No. 4 and 5, the same property as conveyed to Gunnell and Ford.²⁸² Moncure mortgaged to James M. Love for \$1800,²⁸³ and, on January 19, 1900, for \$3300, conveyed to Alfred H. and W. P. Moncure²⁸⁴

the lot of land containing about one acre with buildings and appurtenances thereto situated in the town of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Va., the same being known as the Ford lot which was conveyed to E. R. Ford by J. C. Gunnell ... It also being the same land which was conveyed to the said R. C. L. Moncure by the heirs of the late E. R. Ford ...

The grantees mortgaged the lots on May 26, 1900 to C. Vernon Ford.²⁸⁵ Thomas R. Keith died seized of this property in 1944.²⁸⁶

Additional records for lots No. 4 and 5 are listed in the notes.²⁸⁷

Lot No. 6

Lot No. 6 was allotted to Penelope Jackson in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. After her death in 1837, a suit was filed by her heirs to sell the lands of which she died seized. Lot No. 6 was sold to Ferdinand D.

Richardson for \$30.²⁸⁸ The deed to Richardson, dated August 12, 1840, conveying his purchases from the sale, mentions lots No. 23 and 27 which he had also bought, but not lot No. 6.²⁸⁹ Evidence points to his having purchased lot No. 6 for Nancy Allison, though no deed has been found. Richardson was trustee in the 1838 marriage contract between Nancy Stanhope and Gordon Allison, holding Nancy's property for her own use.²⁹⁰ Nancy died in 1872. Her town lots were sold by court decree.²⁹¹ Richardson released his rights as trustee to the purchasers: Frances A. Murray, the fifty-three-year-old widow of Thomas J. Murray, who purchased a house and lot for \$830,²⁹² and James Ferguson who purchased a lot for \$160.²⁹³ The deed to Ferguson, dated June 29, 1874, from special commissioner Thomas Moore, describes his lot as bounded on the north by North Street, on the west by Mechanics Street, on the east by Frances A. Murray, and on the south by Amanda Halley. (Miss Halley had purchased a house and lot for \$550 from the commissioners of sale in an 1859 suit to sell for debt the property of Edward Sangster.)²⁹⁴ Both the Murray and Ferguson lots were parts of lots No. 6 and 10. The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas*²⁹⁵ shows them as equal in size, but this may not be accurate. James Ferguson lost the property in an 1889 suit filed by Albert A. Dewey when it was sold for debt to Mary C. Watkins for \$480.²⁹⁶ The deed to Watkins was dated January 29, 1891.²⁹⁷ By deed dated March 14, 1898, Mary C. Ellis, formerly Watkins, conveyed this same lot to Joseph E. Willard for \$700.²⁹⁸

Frances A. Murray mortgaged her lot to Thomas Moore on October 2, 1883 to secure a debt she owed to Frank and Adler, merchants.²⁹⁹ On January 20, 1885, Thomas Moore advertised the lot for sale, offering it at public auction. It was sold to Frank and Adler for \$450. E. D. Ficklin offered \$500. Frank and Adler accepted Ficklin's offer, allowing the difference to be paid to Frances A. Murray. This lot was described as bounded by West (should be North) Street and a line parallel to Mechanics Street, on Main Street with the privilege of a four-foot alley, the same property as conveyed to Murray.³⁰⁰ On October 6, 1886, E. D. Ficklin and wife Virginia E. conveyed the property to F. W. Richardson for \$350.³⁰¹

See also the discussion of lot No. 10. For additional records for lot No. 6 see notes.³⁰²

Lot No. 7

An 1841 deed from John W. Graham to Joshua C. Gunnell and Ford and Moss, trustees, recites that Graham was indebted to Ford and Moss in

the sum of \$42.79. He conveyed in trust a quarter acre, the west half of lot No. 7.³⁰³ An 1846 deed recites that John W. Graham had acquired this property at the sale of the town lots of Locian Gunnell's heirs.³⁰⁴ No deed to Graham is recorded. The 1846 deed, from J. C. Gunnell and wife Eliza J. to George Chichester, conveyed for \$750 a half-acre lot bounded on the south by Main Street, on the north by North Street, on the east by the lot of Catherine Draper, and on the west by the lots of Nancy and William Allison, known as the west half of lots No. 7 and 11, being purchased by J. C. Gunnell from commissioners Sangster and Powell at the sale of John W. Graham's property by his trustees (Ford and Moss). The commissioners sold at public auction the west half of lot No. 11 (formerly belonging to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased) to Nancy H. Graham for \$165.³⁰⁵ In 1841, Nancy conveyed in trust to F. D. Richardson for a \$100 debt to William D. Willcoxon.³⁰⁶ In 1842, she sold the property to J. C. Gunnell for \$507.³⁰⁷

George Chichester and wife Mary D., Alfred Moss and S. M. Ball, conveyed to Sybil Blincoe for \$750, the west half of lots No. 7 and 11 which Chichester had mortgaged in 1846 to Moss and Ball.³⁰⁸ Chichester had paid the trust in full, and sold to Blincoe.³⁰⁹ A deed dated June 17, 1893 recites that Joseph D. Watkins purchased at public auction for \$355 the lot conveyed by Chichester to Sybil Blincoe and devised by her will to Henry W. Thomas in trust for her heirs.³¹⁰ The property was conveyed to Watkins by special commissioner R. W. Moore.³¹¹ Joseph D. Watkins and wife Elizabeth Whitehead Watkins conveyed to Oliver B. Campbell the same property by deed dated June 15, 1917.³¹²

The 1846 deed from Gunnell to Chichester³¹³ implies that Catharine Draper occupied the property to the east of the west half of lots No. 7 and 11, or the east half of the same lots. The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows William R. Chapman on the east half of the lots. The 1861 deed of trust from Draper to Chapman states that the property was purchased from Love and Gunnell, commissioners.³¹⁴ This same statement is made in the bill of complaint in the 1861 suit styled *Chapman vs. Draper*,³¹⁵ but no deed to Draper from commissioners Love and Gunnell is recorded in Fairfax County. However, an 1843 deed from Catharine Draper to Nelson Conrad for \$220.58 in trust for George W. Hunter, Jr. (her security for \$20 rent owed to R. R. Jackson) conveyed a quarter-acre lot "being the land purchased by Thomas Orr under a sale by decree of court ..." adjoining Catharine's lot, also her interest in the house and lot in which she resided.³¹⁶ No deed from Orr to Draper, or from the commissioners of sale to Orr, is on record.

See also discussion of lot No. 11.

Lot No. 8

The west portion of lot No. 8, four poles on the Little River Turnpike and eight poles to the back, was reserved by Richard Ratcliffe in his will for his sons Robert, John, Samuel, and Charles who were to have the “brick store house and lott” for the purpose of keeping stores. As shown earlier, Richard had sold the eastern six poles to James Allison in 1812 though he never executed a deed. William Allison, brother of James, acquired the eastern six poles of lot No. 8 from Richard’s heirs by decree of the district court in Fredericksburg in 1828.³¹⁷ William then conveyed to Gordon and Robert Allison in the same year.³¹⁸ In an 1836 deed of trust to Thomas J. Murray, Gordon and Robert Allison conveyed³¹⁹

two large brick houses with the land attached thereto and usually occupied with the said houses by said Gordon and Robert Allison the said houses being in the Town of Providence ... and at this time occupied by the said Gordon and Robert Allison the one as a store house the other as a Tavern ...

William Allison regained possession of the six poles in 1843.³²⁰ Gordon and Robert Allison had mortgaged all their properties in the town,³²¹ most of which were sold in 1841 to James Gordon Allison by Thomas R. Love, trustee.³²² James, son of Gordon, conveyed the six poles with the tavern and store to William.

In 1834, Robert Ratcliffe had mortgaged to Robert R. Jackson his interest in the brick store house “now in the occupation of George W. Gordon.”³²³ No deed or lease to Gordon is on record. James Sangster, agent for Jackson, sold in 1834 for \$395 to Gerrard L. W. Hunt, all Robert Ratcliffe’s interest in and to “the brick store house and lott ...”³²⁴

Charles and Samuel Ratcliffe had sold their interests in lot No. 8. John had died and his son Francis and daughter Charlotte had also sold their interests. Robert Ratcliffe, with Peter B. Bradley and Rezin Willcoxen, divided the lots, Ratcliffe and Bradley taking the four poles of lot No. 8.³²⁵ (See earlier discussion for details.)

William Allison of Richmond, Virginia, brother of James, Robert, and Gordon Allison, gave power of attorney to Benjamin Waters of Alexandria on February 16, 1843, to settle with James Gordon Allison³²⁶

the account standing open between us, to take possession of and hold, as my agent and attorney, the tavern house, other buildings and land formerly owned by Gordon and Robert Allison at Fairfax Court House and purchased at a sale ... to rent, lease or sell the same ...

William Allison died in 1850.³²⁷ Robert Allison purchased the tavern lot at auction in 1859,³²⁸ also a part of lot No. 10. After his death in 1864,³²⁹ Robert's heirs sold the tavern lot to O. W. Hunt for \$535;³³⁰ the deed to Hunt from Commissioner Jonathan Roberts was dated March 15, 1869.³³¹ Hunt conveyed part of this property to George H. Williams for \$400 by deed dated March 18, 1869.³³² The property was described in the deed as part of the Allison Tavern lot east of the division fence between O. W. Hunt and George H. Williams. Another property sold by commissioner Roberts was a stable lot belonging to Robert Allison's estate. It was sold for \$105 to James Ferguson, probably part of lot No. 10.³³³

Peter B. Bradley still held an interest in the four poles on which stood the brick store house. His widow Catharine sued for the sale of this interest.³³⁴

By deed dated December 20, 1843, Richard R. Farr and Robert Allison, commissioners, conveyed to Jane Hunt "the brick corner store house and Lott" for \$2270. The interest of Rezin Willcoxon, acquired from Henry and Charlotte Helm and by division with Robert Ratcliffe, was also sold at the same time.³³⁵ No deed was recorded from Jane Hunt to her son George W., but the Hopkins *Atlas*, 1879, shows George W. Hunt's store on lot No. 8, with Reverend George H. Williams adjoining on the east.

George H. Williams conveyed to Bleeker Canfield for \$250 part of the Allison Tavern lot fronting on Main Street fifty feet six inches and adjoining O.W. Hunt and R. R. Farr.³³⁶ The deed is dated September 20, 1884. Bleeker Canfield and wife Harriet conveyed the same property by deed dated June 10, 1885 to George W. Hawhurst.³³⁷ Hawhurst and wife Ida J. conveyed to Job Hawhurst Allison's Tavern lot fronting on Main Street, adjoining O. W. Hunt and Hawhurst (formerly Farr).³³⁸ Job Hawhurst conveyed to Richard R. Farr, postmaster at Fairfax Court House,³³⁹ by deed dated December 14, 1904.³⁴⁰ The Hawhursts were Quakers, active in temperance and civic affairs.³⁴¹

Additional records for lot No.8 are listed in the notes.³⁴²

Lot No.9

Lot No.9 was allotted to Penelope Jackson in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. At her death in 1837, her lots were sold by court decree.³⁴³ However, lot No. 9 was withheld from the sale. Penelope's nuncupative (spoken) will provided for her daughter Ann R. Green (for-

merly Hubbals) to select the lot of her choice for her own use.³⁴⁴ Ann selected lot No. 9 valued at \$600. Later suits challenged Ann's right to hold the lot, reciting that Penelope's estate was in debt, that all her property was subject to the debt, and that it should all be sold and the proceeds divided among the heirs after the debts were paid. The plaintiffs also argued that real property could not pass by nuncupative will.³⁴⁵ The court, evidently, agreed, and in 1871 ruled that lot No. 9 should be sold. The lot was divided into three equal parcels and sold at public auction before the courthouse door on Monday, March 20, 1872, to R. R. Farr, he offering the highest bid. Farr purchased parcel #1 for Masonic Lodge No. 57 (Henry Lodge) at \$240, parcel No. 2 for Charles H. Carver at \$190, and parcel No. 3 for himself. The plat accompanying the sale record in this suit clearly shows the property as lot No. 9 in the original plan of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots.

A deed dated April 28, 1885, from Thomas Moore, commissioner of sale, conveyed to Richard R. Farr all three parcels of lot No. 9. No mention was made in the deed that Farr had purchased two of the parcels as a trustee.³⁴⁶ A later deed, dated February 11, 1901, made by C. Vernon Ford, special commissioner, conveyed parcel No. 1 (the eastern-most parcel) to Joseph E. Willard. This deed recites that the 1885 deed was faulty. Willard had purchased the right of the true owner, and at the February 1901 term, the court ordered the conveyance of parcel #1 to him.³⁴⁷ Willard conveyed his parcel of lot No. 9 to S. R. Donohoe, a prominent democrat, Fairfax town councilman, bank director, and publisher,³⁴⁸ in 1903,³⁴⁹ the same property conveyed to Willard by special commissioner Ford in 1901. In 1925, S. R. Donohoe's heirs sold to George B. Robey,³⁵⁰ an attorney and Fairfax town councilman.³⁵¹ Robey, with wife Susie D., conveyed to William F. and Elizabeth A. Carne, in 1926, the lot where the "Fairfax Herald Office now stands."³⁵²

By deed dated April 23, 1885, Richard R. Farr and wife Maggie E. sold to George W. Hawkhurst parcel No. 3 of lot No. 9, 6669 square feet, for \$250.³⁵³ No deed from Carver for his parcel of lot No. 9 was recorded prior to 1900.

Additional records for lot No. 9 are listed in the notes.³⁵⁴

Lot No.10

As shown earlier, the east half of lot No.10 was conveyed by Richard Ratcliffe and wife Locian to Henry Logan in 1812 and by Logan and wife

Sarah to Hugh Smith. Smith and wife Elizabeth, of Alexandria, District of Columbia, conveyed to Gordon and Robert Allison June 30, 1820. The Allisons mortgaged their properties to Robert J. Taylor and Thomas R. Love, trustees. James Gordon Allison bought some of the mortgaged lots at public sale, conveying to William Allison the stable lot, or back part of the east half of lot No.10. The remaining part was sold in two parcels, one by the trustees to Henry Taylor in 1837 for \$500.50 containing two small brick tenements on the north side of the Little River Turnpike forty-four by forty feet with the privilege of a four-foot alley on the west side, "being part of the lot conveyed by Hugh Smith and wife to Gordon and Robert Allison June 30, 1820..." The second parcel was sold by James Gordon Allison to Lawson T. Thompson for \$100 June 1, 1840. It was described in the deed as being bound by the Turnpike on the south, by Henry Taylor's lot on the east, by James Gordon Allison's stable lot on the north, and by Patsy Coleman on the west, about thirty-four-and-a-half feet on the turnpike road. In another deed, Thompson's lot was described as being forty feet from the turnpike to the back line.³⁵⁵

Patsy Coleman had received the west half of lot No.10 in the division of her father Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. By deed dated October 21, 1844, Patsy sold to William Allison of the City of Richmond, Virginia, for \$250 the west half of lot No.10.³⁵⁶

Henry Taylor and wife Jane, by deed dated January 7, 1842, conveyed to Ferdinand D. Richardson for \$500, in trust for the use of Nancy Allison, wife of Gordon, two small brick tenements and the lot of land on the north side of the Little River Turnpike which Henry had bought from Robert J. Taylor and Thomas R. Love, trustees.³⁵⁷

William Allison gave power of attorney in 1843 to Benjamin Waters to settle accounts with James Gordon Allison. William and wife Ann, by deed dated November 18, 1847, sold to Albert H. Bradt for \$150, part of the west half of lot No. 10, five poles on the Little River Turnpike (Fairfax Street) and forty feet to the back line. Bradt and wife Susan C., daughter of Jane Hunt, sold to Edward Sangster of Alexandria County for \$300 this same property, by deed dated September 9, 1848.³⁵⁸

William Allison, by his agent Benjamin Waters, had sold to Ferdinand D. Richardson as trustee for Nancy Allison, wife of Gordon, the part of the east half of lot No.10 which lay to the rear of Lawson T. Thompson's lot. William Allison died before making a deed to Richardson. His widow Ann, in her own right and as trustee for her children James Waters, William Henry, and Ellen Victoria Allison, infants, with Benjamin Waters who was

now executor of William's estate, conveyed to Richardson for \$125 by deed dated January 23, 1854, the property to the rear of Thompson, except for an eighteen-inch strip for a drain on the east side of the stable lot³⁵⁹

adjoining the one hereby bargained and sold, commencing at the front of the said stable and running back to the back line of said stable lot.

This description seems to place a stable on the west half of lot No. 10. However, Thompson's lot on the east half was described in 1840 as bounded on the north by the stable lot. In the suit held in Richmond styled *Allison vs. Allison* to sell the town lots of which William Allison died seized, Robert Allison became the purchaser of the tavern and store house³⁶⁰

also what remains unsold of a certain lot in the Village of Providence upon which the stable is now situated which was purchased by William Allison from Patsy Coleman ...

This description places a stable on the west half of lot No. 10, the stable lot sold to James Ferguson in 1869 for \$105 in 1869 (see note #327). The 1870 census lists Ferguson as a livery stable keeper and his color as B/M (Black/Mulatto).

As discussed in lot No. 6, Ferdinand D. Richardson, trustee for Nancy Allison, released his interest in her town lots after her death in 1872. The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows James Ferguson and Fanny Murray on lots No. 6 and 10. Ferguson and Murray purchased these properties at the sale ordered by the court.³⁶¹ Murray purchased a house and lot for \$839 and Ferguson purchased a lot for \$160. Murray's lot passed to E. D. Ficklin, and in 1886 to F. W. Richardson. The Ferguson parcel passed to Mary C. Watkins (later Mary C. Ellis), then from Ellis to Joseph E. Willard (see lot No. 6 for details).

The deed to Ferguson from special commissioner Thomas Moore, dated June 29, 1874, described his lots as bounded on the north by West (sic, North) Street, on the west by Mechanic Street, on the east by Frances A. Murray, and on the south by Amanda Halley. Halley had purchased her house and lot for \$550 at a sale ordered by the court when Edward Sangster lost his properties for default as sheriff of Alexandria County.³⁶² The Halley lot was the same parcel sold by William Allison to Albert H. Bradt, and by Bradt to Sangster. Edward Sangster had been elected sheriff of Alexandria County in 1856. His securities sued him in 1859, reciting "your honor may well conceive their surprise when they received notice from the Auditor of the Commonwealth" that they were held liable for the entire amount of the revenue for the County of Alexandria for the year 1857. Sangster was un-

able to meet his default. With wife Mary K., he mortgaged to A. J. Sangster and J. C. Gunnell a portion of his real estate and negroes. In a deed dated February 12, 1858, Edward Sangster, as sheriff of Alexandria County, and wife Mary K., conveyed to his securities several lots at Fairfax Court House.³⁶³

The deed to Frances A. Murray describes her purchase as:

Beginning at a corner common to Halley, Thompson, and Ferguson, with Ferguson's line and parallel to Mechanics Street to the back or West [North] Street, thence easterly with West [North] Street to a corner of this lot and Blincoe, with the dividing line between Blincoe and this lot to Main Street, to a 4' alley ... to corner of Thompson ... with Thompson ... to the beginning ...

This property included the stable lot and Henry Taylor's lot, and a four-foot alley. The descriptions of the Murray and Ferguson lots clearly define lot No.10 in 1873 as consisting of Amanda Halley's parcel in the southwest corner on the Turnpike, James Ferguson to the north and in back of Halley, Frances A. Murray with all of the east half except for Thompson between Halley and the alley. F. D. Richardson, as trustee for Nancy Allison, must have acquired from William Allison or his estate the lot which was later sold to Ferguson on the west half of lot No.10, though no deed seems to have been recorded. Lawson T. Thompson, by will dated February 19, 1886, and probated at August court of the same year, devised his town lots to his five children: Samuel, Wilson, and Alfred Thompson, Laura Tobin and Sarah J. Walker.³⁶⁴ By deed dated December 10, 1892, Alfred H. Thompson and wife Annie L., Samuel L. Thompson and wife Elizabeth D., Sarah J. Walker and husband Thomas H., and Laura V. Tobin and husband John C. conveyed their interests to Wilson H. Thompson for \$240. Wilson H. and wife Frances A. conveyed for \$100 to F. W. Richardson in 1894.³⁶⁵

Joseph E. Willard's Old Town Hall was erected on Amanda Halley's (Albert Bradt's) part of lot No.10. Halley had evidently never received a deed, though she had purchased the lot, five poles by forty feet, at the sale of Edward Sangster's town lots and paid in full. By deed dated December 8, 1897, O.W. Hunt trustee, conveyed, by the direction of Amanda Halley, to Joseph E. Willard the lot she had purchased in 1867 at Sangster's sale.³⁶⁶ Joseph E. and wife Belle L. Wyatt Willard conveyed the hall to the trustees of the Masonic Organization Henry Lodge No.57 by deed dated July 30, 1900.³⁶⁷ An article in the *Alexandria Gazette* for August 16, 1900 recites:³⁶⁸

The new Masonic hall just built at Fairfax by Capt. J. E. Willard to replace the old lodge room, which was burned some time since, was opened last night for the first time...

By 1900, the west half of lot No.10 was owned by Joseph E. Willard, and the east half by F. W. Richardson.

Additional records for lot No.10 are listed in the notes.³⁶⁹

Lot No.11

The west half of lot No.11 was allotted to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased, in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. (See also discussion of lot No.7.)

The east half of lot No.11, the Chapman lot, was allotted to Penelope Jackson. After her death in 1837, her town lots were sold at public auction.³⁷⁰ Penelope's son Robert R. Jackson purchased the east half of lot No.11 for \$250. There is confusion as to whether Jackson bought a fee simple title to the property, or only his mother's interest in a ground rent. Jackson requested the special commissioner to make a conveyance to him on the east half of lot No.11. A deed dated December 6, 1860 from special commissioner Alfred Moss conveyed to Jackson³⁷¹

The ground rent and all rights incident thereto of a lot of ground at Fairfax Court House belonging to Simeon Draper's estate and known as the east half of lot No.11 ...

No other deed to Jackson for this property is on record.

By deed dated April 14, 1821, Richard Ratcliffe and wife Locian leased to Simeon Draper the east half of lot No.11, described as a quarter acre, eight poles by five poles on East Street and the Little River Turnpike, for \$20 per year forever, Draper agreeing³⁷²

that no tavern, house of public entertainment for travellers or others or livery stable be at any time kept or suffered to be kept or used on said hereby granted lot for fifteen years from the date hereof under penalty of two hundred dollars additional rent for each and every year ...

But by 1836, Mrs. Draper did have a house of entertainment in the village.³⁷³ The 1867 suit styled *William R. Chapman and wife vs. Draper, etc.*³⁷⁴ recites that Simeon Draper died intestate, leaving widow Catharine and daughters Maria Louisa, Eliza M., Catharine, and Caroline his heirs at law. Eliza M. married James R. Millan and had son George S., Catharine married Richard H. Wheeler, Maria Louisa married William R. Chapman, and Caroline married Moses Febry. The suit states that Simeon Draper died possessed of two houses and lots at Fairfax Court House, but that one had

to be sold for debt.^{374b} No mention was made of the fact that Draper possessed only a lease on the properties rather than a fee simple estate. His widow Catharine resided in the remaining house on the east half of lot No.11, though she conveyed it in trust to William R. Chapman, her son-in-law, for debt. She defaulted and the property was sold, with Chapman himself as the purchaser of her interest.³⁷⁵ Catharine had also acquired the east half of lot No.7 to the north and in back of her lot from commissioners Love and Gunnell, but no deed to her from them is on record. (See discussion of lot No.7.)

In a deed dated November 9, 1868, Richard H. Wheeler and wife Catharine conveyed to William R. Chapman their interest in the house and lot for \$250, being an undivided fourth part³⁷⁶

and they do warrant generally the said interest in and to said property
...except as to ground rent ... at present owned by Robert R. Jackson.

By deed dated December 20, 1843, James R. Millan and wife Eliza conveyed to George W. Hunter, Jr., for \$200 their one fourth interest in the house and lot "purchased by Simeon Draper of Richard Ratcliffe."³⁷⁷ There is no recorded release from the Febrys. There is no recorded conveyance of Hunter's one fourth interest to Chapman.

In Robert R. Jackson's will, probated in 1872, he states that "the tene-
ment in the possession of William R. Chapman" was to be sold.³⁷⁸ Jackson named his wife Matilda A. and son James T. Jackson, or either one, execu-
tors. James T. Jackson, in 1875, as Robert's executor, sold to William R.
Chapman for \$215 all the testator's interest in the annual rent.³⁷⁹ No other
conveyance for this property from Robert R. Jackson's estate is on record.

William R. Chapman, in his will probated in 1879, devised all his es-
tate to his wife for the support of herself and their children and after her
death to be equally divided among the remaining heirs.³⁸⁰ By deed dated
February 25, 1901, William R. Chapman's heirs, all of Washington, D. C.,
conveyed to Minor L. Thompson³⁸¹

all that house and lot situated in the town of Fairfax (formerly Village
of Providence) ... which said lot is bounded on the south, east, and
north by the streets of said town and on the west by Watkins' lot it
being the same house and lot which was conveyed ... to William R.
Chapman ... and by the said William R. Chapman devised to his chil-
dren by will ...

A later deed described the property as the "Chapman lot" bounded on the
north by North Street, on the east by East Street, on the south by the Little

River Turnpike, and on the west by Watkins, a half acre conveyed to R. C. L. Moncure by special commissioner in the suit styled *Moncure vs. Thompson*,³⁸² the same land conveyed by the Chapman heirs to Thompson.³⁸³ The property included the east halves of lots No.11 and 7.

A curious aspect of Roman and civil law might apply in the case of the east half of lot No. 11. In the definition of “emphyteusis” in *Black’s Law Dictionary*,³⁸⁴ the word refers to a contract by which landed estate was leased in perpetuity or for a long period of time, upon the reservation of an annual rent or “canon” and upon the condition that the lessee improve the property, with a right in the lessee to alien the estate or pass it to his heirs by descent, free from any claims or re-entry except for non-payment of the rent. The term “ground rent” is defined as a perpetual rent reserved by the grantor of land in fee simple, in the nature of an emphyteutic rent. In this context, Penelope Jackson inherited from her father’s estate the ground rent in the east half of lot No.11. When the ground rent was sold to William R. Chapman by Robert R. Jackson’s executor in 1875, Chapman obtained in effect a fee simple title to the lot.

Lot No.12

The west half of lot No.12, as seen earlier, was devised by Richard Ratcliffe’s will to his sons Robert, John, Samuel, and Charles, and was called ”Hague’s lot.” Francis Hague kept a tavern there ca. 1812.³⁸⁵ Rezin Willcoxen became the owner in 1831, in a division with Robert Ratcliffe and Peter B. Bradley who, with Willcoxen, had acquired the interests of the other heirs. The lot was described as “now occupied by John H. Sweeney and John Beck.”³⁸⁶ Sweeney was the husband of Willcoxen’s daughter Jane. In the suit to divide Willcoxen’s estate,³⁸⁷ a plat shows “Mrs. Beck’s lot” which was described as”

Situated on the North East corner of the lot on which Ford’s Store stands fronting 29 feet on the Street and running back 25 feet ... containing 725 square feet ...

Beck’s lot was valued at \$200 and allotted to Newman Burke and wife Catharine. John H. Sweeney died ca. 1856 leaving widow Jane and their nine children, and no property.³⁸⁸ There is no recorded deed from Rezin Willcoxen for the remaining part of the west half of lot No.12, but it did not appear in the division of his estate. In his will, Rezin left certain lots to his wife Fanny for her lifetime or widowhood.³⁸⁹

VILLAGE PROPERTY FOR SALE.

Pursuant to the decree of the Circuit Court of Fairfax County, pronounced at its November, 1878, term, in the suit of Lawson & Co. vs. Wm. B. Butler, the undersigned special Commissioner named in said decree will, on

Monday March 17, 1879, Court Day,

At 12 o'clock M., sell to the highest bidder that House and Lot, owned by the defendant and occupied by Mr. B. Utterback. This lot is improved by a large frame building and out buildings and has always been regarded as a good business stand.

Terms of Sale: One fourth of the purchase money in hand and the residue in three equal annual payments, to be on interest from day of sale, bonds with good personal security and retention of title until the last payment is made.

THOMAS MOORE,

Feby. 15, 1879.

Commissioner of Sale.

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PRINT.

Broadsid advertising the sale of lot No. 12.

The east half of lot No.12 was allotted to Locian Gunnell's heirs in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's estate. In the suit styled *Alfred Moss etc., vs George W. Gunnell, etc.*, this half lot was sold to Nelson Conrad for \$395. The deed to Conrad from Commissioners George W. Gunnell and Thomas R. Love was dated March 31, 1853,³⁹⁰ though Conrad came into possession of the property by 1842, as evidenced by an agreement with Rezin Willcoxen dated April 25th of that year, which recites:³⁹¹

Whereas Rezon Willcoxon is at this date owner of the one half of lot No 12 in the original plat of the town of Providence ... the same being the NW half thereof and whereas Nelson Conrad is owner of the other half of said lot and Whereas Richard Farr is owner of lot No 13 in said plat which two lots compose one half of a square in said town bounded by Payne Street on the NW and by Mechanics Street on the SE and fronting on the paved road (or Fairfax Street) and whereas the said Willcoxen has by inadvertance and through mistake built his kitchen four feet or thereabouts extending over the line between ... Willcoxon and ... Conrad and on the lot of said Conrad, it is therefore agreed ... that the foundation log of the back part of said kitchen shall form the base of the line between the lots ... and [be] the dividing line, and the said Farr ... agrees to give ... to ... Conrad in consideration of the surrender by ... Conrad of the four feet ... six feet of his lot (No 13) running with the paved road or Fairfax Street and extending back as far as a parallel with the original line between lots No 12 and 13 ...

By deed dated January 21, 1854, Nelson Conrad and wife Mary L. conveyed to Harrison T. Monroe the east half of lot No.12 for \$600^{392a}

excepting however about four feet ... on the western side ... conveyed by said Nelson Conrad to Rezin Willcoxen ... also all that lot of ground adjoining the one above ... lying on the east side thereof its entire length and six feet in width ... conveyed to Nelson Conrad by R. R. Farr ...

Harrison T. Monroe devised to his wife Narcissa, a daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Sebastian,^{392b} his entire estate. His will was dated February 16, 1859 and probated March 21st of that year.³⁹³ Narcissa Monroe, by deed dated October 2, 1872, conveyed to Margaret C. Farr, daughter of Rezin Willcoxen and widow of Richard R. Farr,³⁹⁴ for \$350:³⁹⁵

Beginning on the Little River Turnpike corner of Newman Burke formerly Willcoxen running thence east with said turnpike to the center of the alley measuring wall to wall between this lot and the house occupied by D. W. Whiting, thence South by a line parallel to Burke and Stevenson's line back to the line of W. Powell thence with his line

to the line or corner of Stevenson (formerly Willcoxon) thence with Stevenson and Burke to the beginning.

Narcissa filed a claim with the Southern Claims Commission in 1877 for damages to her property during the Civil War.³⁹⁶ Sixty-four years old, resident of Providence for forty-two years, she asked \$1187 compensation, insisting she was loyal to the Union. The commissioners, after hearing testimony, disallowed her claim.

No deed to Stevenson for part of the west half of lot No.12 was recorded, but the wording in the deed from Narcissa Monroe to Margaret C. Farr clearly states that Stevenson's piece was "formerly Willcoxon." In a suit to sell Abner Stephenson's land filed by his heirs,³⁹⁷ Commissioner Thomas R. Keith sold a part of the west half of lot No.12 to M.D. Hall, C. F. Swetnam, and Samuel Stone. Stone's will devised his interest to his cousin Hulda V. Coffer.³⁹⁸ A deed dated October 17, 1895, from Commissioner Keith conveyed to Hall, Swetnam, and Coffer a lot described as bounded on the north by the Little River Turnpike, on the west by Payne Street, on the south by the Powell lot, and on the east by "what is known as the Beck lot."³⁹⁹ Hall and Coffer conveyed 4400 square feet to the National Bank of Fairfax by deed dated January 23, 1903.⁴⁰⁰

The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows Job Hawxhurst's store and post office on the west half, and a portion of the east half, of lot No.12. In the Report of Receipts and Disbursements since October 1, 1879 in *Stephenson vs. Stephenson* there is a listing for "rent of Job Hawxhurst." This could indicate that Hawxhurst leased the property from Stephenson. Since no deed to Hawxhurst was recorded for any part of lot No.12, it is likely he also leased from Margaret C. Farr.

Narcissa Monroe's deed to Margaret C. Farr in 1872 was for a portion of the east half of lot No.12, from Newman Burke's northwest corner on the Little River Turnpike to the center of an alley between this lot and the house occupied by Whiting. By deed dated April 1, 1873, Narcissa conveyed to William B. Butler for \$1250 the lot occupied by him.⁴⁰¹ Was Butler living in the house occupied by Whiting the year before? The property conveyed to Butler was described as

Beginning on the Little River Turnpike at a corner of this lot and Peabody, thence with Peabody back to the line of W. Powell, thence with Powell westerly to the corner of the lot sold to Mrs. M. C. Farr, thence with the line of this and the lot of Farr northerly to the beginning ...

John Peabody occupied lot No.13. (See discussion of that lot.)

On the same day (April 1, 1873), William B. Butler conveyed the property in trust to Thomas Moore for \$800 owed to Narcissa.⁴⁰² By deed dated June 6, 1879, Thomas Moore, commissioner appointed by the court,⁴⁰³ conveyed Butler's lot to Dallas Powell for \$400.⁴⁰⁴ Butler had been indebted to the firm of R. B. Lawson and company and was unable to meet the judgments against him. According to the 1879 advertisement for the sale of Butler's lot, the house was occupied by Mr. B. Utterback. Narcissa petitioned the court to join the suit as a co-plaintiff, citing a debt which Butler still owed her. Dallas Powell conveyed the property in 1882 to Mildred L., Virginia R., Martha E., and Ella J. Powell for \$100.⁴⁰⁵ The grantees secured a note for \$250 owed to Albert Dewey by mortgaging the lot to D. M. Chichester in 1885.⁴⁰⁶ The trust was released in 1891.⁴⁰⁷ Ella J. Powell died ca. 1889. Her will, dated November 26, 1886, left all her estate to her sisters Mildred, Virginia, and Martha.⁴⁰⁸

There is no record of a conveyance by Newman Burke for "Beck's lot." Burke died intestate in 1889.⁴⁰⁹ Catharine [Willcoxon] Burke, Newman's widow, died December 1, 1910.⁴¹⁰ The name "Beck's lot" was still in use in 1895.⁴¹¹

A 1903 plat shows a brick building on the northwest corner of lot No.12.⁴¹²

A 1909 description of a part of the west half of lot No.12 reads:⁴¹³

... on the SE corner of Payne Street and the Little River Turnpike thence with the east side of Payne SW ...40' to a corner of the Powell lot, thence with said lot SE 88' to the corner of Mrs. Margaret Farr's lot, thence with her lot ... to the beginning ...

Additional records for lot No.12 are listed in the notes.⁴¹⁴

Lot No.13

Lot No.13 was allotted in Richard Ratcliffe's division of town lots to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased. In the suit styled *Edward Sangster etc. vs. Jane Ratcliffe, etc.*⁴¹⁵ lots No.13 and 17 were sold to Richard R. Farr for \$485 and deeded to him by Commissioners John Powell and Edward Sangster in 1840.⁴¹⁶ Farr and wife Margaret, by deed dated March 9, 1843, conveyed to Ferdinand D. Richardson, trustee for John W. and Ann M. [Bradley] Graham, for \$800 lot No.13⁴¹⁷

now occupied by W. P. Richardson ... being part of the same lot purchased by said Richard R. Farr from John Powell and Edward Sangster,

commissioners, excepting however ... seventeen and a half feet of said lot from the dividing line between Nelson Conrad and Richard R. Farr ...

(Farr had relinquished a six-foot strip of lot No.13. See discussion of lot No.12.)

Richard R. Farr died in 1845. His will allots all his estate to his wife Margaret for her lifetime and, upon her death, to his children.⁴¹⁸ Margaret filed suit to sell the lands in her husband's estate.⁴¹⁹ In her bill of complaint, Margaret said that the estate was indebted and the lands unproductive. She had contracted with Edward Sangster for a sale of an unimproved half acre lot (No.17) and a seventeen-and-a-half-foot alley leading from Main (Fairfax) Street for \$250. Depositions in the suit attested that this was a fair price. A deed, dated August ___, 1848, was made from Commissioner William D. Willcoxon to Edward Sangster for the half acre lot (no.17) and the alley on lot No.13.⁴²⁰

Ferdinand D. Richardson became trustee for the Grahams in their marriage contract.⁴²¹ Having acquired for them part of lot No.13 from Richard R. Farr in 1843, he then purchased, for \$100 from Edward Sangster and wife Mary in 1853, the seventeen-and-a-half-foot alley "adjoining the lots of Graham and wife and Nelson Conrad ..."⁴²²

By deed dated October 12, 1870, Ann M. Graham, with the consent of F. D. Richardson, trustee, conveyed to R. R. Farr who was trustee for Gertrude, wife of W. W. Skinner, the western half of lot No.13, the half containing the alley.⁴²³ Gertrude Skinner mortgaged to Thomas Moore the same day.⁴²⁴ Gertrude was the daughter of John W. and Ann M. Graham. At age seventeen, she had married the twenty-two-year-old Skinner October 11, 1860.⁴²⁵ R. R. Farr, as trustee, by deed dated February 1, 1872, conveyed the west half of lot No.13 to Esther, wife of John Peabody, for \$450. Gertrude quit claimed to Esther, having paid her liens in full.⁴²⁶ John Peabody, a baker, had married Esther Vosburg of Columbia County, New York, in Fairfax County, Virginia, August 12, 1871.⁴²⁷

By deed dated October 26, 1878, Ann M. Graham, with her trustee, conveyed to D. M. Chichester the east half of lot No.13. The property was described in the deed as being bounded on the north by the Little River Turnpike (Main Street), on the east by Mechanic Street, on the south by Gunnell, and on the west by Skinner.⁴²⁸ Two liens from 1871 were still unpaid.⁴²⁹ Chichester and wife Agnes, by deed dated December 5, 1889, conveyed for \$150 all their interest to Thomas Moore and R. R. Farr, in

trust for Gertrude Skinner.⁴³⁰ In 1904, part of this property was sold by Gertrude and W. W. Skinner for \$600 to Dr. F. M. Brooks.⁴³¹

beginning at a point where the west line of Mechanics Street intersects the south line of the Little River Turnpike or Main Street, thence with the line of Mechanics Street in a southerly direction to the line of Oliver, thence with the line of Oliver in a westerly direction a sufficient distance so that a line drawn parallel with the first line will just touch the eastern edge of the well, thence in a northerly direction (by said parallel line) passing said well to the Little River Turnpike ... thence to the beginning.

Dr. Frederick Manning Brooks, a bachelor, active in Republican politics,⁴³² president of the Fairfax Medical Society, was a country doctor, born in Fairfax County of Pennsylvania Quaker parents, in 1858.⁴³³ He practiced medicine and visited patients until his death in 1941. He kept his part of lot No.13 until 1925.⁴³⁴

John and Esther Peabody conveyed, by deed dated October 21, 1872, the same property conveyed to them by R. R. Farr, trustee for Gertrude Skinner, February 1, 1872, in trust to Thomas Moore for \$200 owed to O. W. Hunt.⁴³⁵ In the margin of this deed are the entries "Satisfied in Full," one signed by O. W. Hunt, the other by F. W. Richardson, attesting to the cancelled note and dated May 17, 1898. John and Esther Peabody of Washington, D. C., took another trust on this property for \$100 owed to Henry Hawhurst. The deed of trust was dated May 19, 1898.⁴³⁶

Additional records for lot No.13 are listed in the notes.⁴³⁷

Lot No.14

Lot No.14 was allotted to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased. In the suit styled *Edward Sangster etc. vs. Jane Ratcliffe, etc.*,⁴³⁸ in which John Powell and Edward Sangster were appointed commissioners to sell the lots at public auction, lot No.14 was struck off to Ferdinand D. Richardson, agent for John Kemp. Richardson transferred his purchase to John Powell, who transferred to Thomas N. Williams. The deed to Williams was dated June 5, 1841.⁴³⁹ Williams and wife Elizabeth M. sold the east half of lot No.14 to Burdett Skinner for \$90 on August 16.⁴⁴⁰ Skinner and wife Ellen sold to Lawson T. Thompson for \$92 three months later.⁴⁴¹

Thomas N. Williams died intestate in 1881.⁴⁴² In 1885, his son George H. Williams, a minister, owner of part of the Allison Tavern lot, married to

a daughter of Ambrose Cock,⁴⁴³ sold his interest in lot No.14 to Joseph W. Whitehead for \$275.⁴⁴⁴ The deed described the property being conveyed as a half-acre lot “of which the late Thomas N. Williams died possessed.” No mention was made of the sale of the east half to Skinner in 1841.

Joseph W. Whitehead had married Salina, daughter of Thomas N. Williams.⁴⁴⁵ He is shown on the 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* on the west half of lot No.14 and Thompson on the east half. There is no recorded deed from Thomas N. Williams to Joseph W. Whitehead. However, a deed dated August 13, 1895 from Whitehead and wife Salina A. of Washington, D. C., to R. W. Moore conveying in trust the half acre lot No.14, recites that the lot was conveyed to Thomas N. Williams by Commissioners Sangster and Powell June 5, 1841, and which at the death of Williams descended to Whitehead and wife and George W. Williams in fee simple.⁴⁴⁶ Again, no mention made in this deed of the 1841 sale to Skinner or of Skinner’s sale to Thompson of the east half of the lot.

Whitehead defaulted on the trust. By deed dated May 20, 1901, R. Walton Moore, trustee, conveyed to J. D. Watkins for \$635, it being the highest bid, the half acre lot No.14.⁴⁴⁷ Commissioner Moore’s report was recorded June 6, 1901.⁴⁴⁸ Watkins and wife Lizzie W. of Washington, D. C. sold to Hugh G. Sauls, a Fairfax grocer,⁴⁴⁹ for \$828 the half acre in 1904.⁴⁵⁰

Lawson Turner Thompson died in 1886. His will devised his town lots to his five children: Samuel, Wilson, Alfred, Laura Tobin, and Sarah J. Walker.⁴⁵¹ As discussed in the section on lot No.10, four of the heirs and their spouses conveyed their interests in the town lots to their brother Wilson H. Thompson in 1892 for \$240.⁴⁵² By deed dated July 7, 1899, Wilson H. Thompson and wife Frances A. of D. C. sold to Alfred H. Moncure for \$550 a quarter acre adjoining Whitehead.⁴⁵³ This deed recites that Wilson had conveyed the property in trust to Charles P. Janney in 1896,⁴⁵⁴ that the trust was fully satisfied, and that he had the right to sell to Moncure. However, Wilson was sued in May 1899 by Hannah R. Bowman, executrix of William T. Rumsey, deceased, for \$92.96 and interest from February 1899, for twelve hundred and fifty-three-and-a-half gallons of milk at 13¢ a gallon supplied to Thompson by Rumsey and for which Rumsey had been only partially paid. The plaintiff asked the court for a sale of Thompson’s town lot.⁴⁵⁵ No final decree has been found for this suit, but Thompson’s sale to Moncure might suggest that a settlement had been reached and Bowman paid.

Alfred H. Moncure sold to R. C. L. Moncure in 1909.⁴⁵⁶ A 1910 deed from W. P. Moncure, M.D., and wife Mary J., to Elizabeth Ferguson, widow

of Uriah M. Ferguson, deceased, and Clara M. Sauls, neé Ferguson, for \$650⁴⁵⁷ recites that the property was to be held by them as tenants in common, that it was a quarter acre, the same property as conveyed by B. Skinner to L. T. Thompson, by Thompson's son Wilson to A. H. Moncure, by him to R. C. L. Moncure, and by him to W. P. Moncure, M.D.⁴⁵⁸

The concurrent transactions for the half acre and the quarter acre of lot No.14 are curious in that the discrepancy was not discovered until as late as 1910. The heirs of Thomas N. Williams were either unaware of the sale to Skinner of the east half of the lot, or chose to disregard it. Lawson T. Thompson is listed in the 1886 tax records for one lot at Fairfax Court House valued at \$300 including buildings, but he owned part of lot No.10 as well as part of lot No.14 at his death in the same year. He is shown on the 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* on the east half of lot No.14. Joseph W. Whitehead is listed in the 1886 land tax records for one lot at Fairfax Court House valued at \$1000 including buildings.

From the records it is clear that Thomas N. Williams owned lot No.14 from June until August of 1841, the west half until his death in 1881, and that Lawson T. Thompson owned the east half from November 1841 until his death in 1886.

Additional records for lot No.14 are listed in the notes.⁴⁵⁹

Lot No.15

Lot No.15 was allotted to the heirs of Locian Gunnell. As seen in the discussion of lot No. 2, the suit to sell her property is not of record in Fairfax County, but deeds already cited show that the sale was conducted by Commissioners George W. Gunnell and Thomas R. Love. By deed dated May 17, 1844, Harrison T. Monroe and wife Narcissa sold to Thomas Cowl-
ing for \$100 a 30' x 123.5' parcel⁴⁶⁰

being a portion of a lot formerly owned by Locian Gunnell's heirs,
allotted to them in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's estate

and purchased by Monroe at the sale. The property is described as

Beginning at a corner between Monroe and Lawson T. Thompson (corner of #14 and 15) with that line to the corner of #14, 15, 18, and 19, thence with the line between #15 and 19 (owned by Patsy Coleman) a distance of 30', thence with a line parallel to the first (between Monroe and Thompson) to Fairfax Street ... and thence to the beginning ...

Thomas Cowling and wife Mary sold to Catharine Bradley by deed dated November 26, 1845 for \$100 the western thirty-foot strip of lot No.15 from Fairfax Street (Main Street or Little River Turnpike) to the corner of lots No.14,15,18, and 19, the same parcel which Cowling purchased from Monroe.⁴⁶¹ Catharine Bradley conveyed to F. D. Richardson in trust for Lucinda E. Pindle in 1846.⁴⁶² Catharine [Farr] Bradley, widow of Peter B. Bradley, and Lucinda E. [Farr] Pindle were sisters, Lucinda having first married Thomas J. Coffer in 1827, then Thomas C. Pindle.⁴⁶³

Lucinda E. Pindle, by deed dated October 21, 1847, sold to William R. Chapman^{464a}

a house and lot in the town of Providence ... conveyed to F. D. Richardson by Catharine Bradley to hold in trust for said Lucinda ...

for \$350.^{464b} The sale contract stipulated that Chapman was to pay \$50 with the balance due in two years. This contract was not fulfilled. Lucinda, with trustee Richardson, resold to George Ronk for \$450 by deed dated January 1, 1853.⁴⁶⁵ Lucinda was now a widow, Thomas C. Pindle having died a lunatic in 1847. Lucinda, a seamstress, had saved enough money to purchase the house and lot from Thomas Cowling, though the deed was made to her sister Catharine.⁴⁶⁶ Ronk and wife Henrietta J. conveyed to Louisa Frances Carver in 1867 for \$550.⁴⁶⁷ Charles H. Carver and Louisa Frances his wife, née Crump, conveyed the lot in trust to E. W. Crump in 1873 to secure a debt of \$300 owed to Levi J. Carver of New York State.⁴⁶⁸ The Carvers defaulted, and Crump, as trustee, sold the property to Susan A. Davis for \$273, the highest bid received at the auction held on Monday, June 19, 1893 at the Fairfax courthouse door.⁴⁶⁹ The property is described as

Beginning on Fairfax Street at the northeast corner of Lawson T. Thompson's lot, thence south with the line of Thompson's lot to the corner of Thompson and Chapman, thence east with Chapman's line to the corner of Chapman and Monroe 30', thence parallel with the first line to Fairfax Street, thence west 30' to the beginning ...

Crump's report as trustee was recorded July 7, 1893.⁴⁷⁰ Charles and Louisa Carver had taken another trust on the property one week after their trust to Crump. They conveyed the lot in trust to Job Hawhurst who, with George and Henrietta J. Ronk, released the trust to the Carvers by deed dated May 13, 1873.⁴⁷¹

Although the sale from Lucinda E. Pindle to William R. Chapman was never completed, he evidently lived on the property for the two-year term

of the contract. This is evidenced by the use of Chapman's name in the description of the property in subsequent deeds. In 1893, Maria L. Chapman, his widow, as executrix and in her own right, quit claimed to Susan A. Davis all her interest in the lot.⁴⁷² Her deed recites

that whereas by contract dated 21st October 1847 and recorded in Liber M No. 3 folio 19 ... one Lucinda E. Pindle did contract to sell to said William R. Chapman a certain house and lot of land in the Town of Providence (Fairfax Court House, Va.) and whereas said contract was not fulfilled and the premises surrendered to said Pindle who subsequently, with her trustee, F. D. Richardson sold and conveyed the same to one George Ronk, who in turn sold and conveyed the same to Louisa Frances Carver and she conveyed the same to E. W. Crump in trust ... and default being made ... the said Crump as trustee, has sold the same to said Davis ...

Susan A. Davis, in her will written 1892, devised all her estate to her daughter Mary A. Davis⁴⁷³ The will was probated in 1910.

Narcissa Monroe, widow of Harrison T. Monroe, conveyed to George Carroll of Washington, D. C., the lot in the village of Fairfax Court House "which she recently occupied." The deed was dated July 1, 1886.⁴⁷⁴ Narcissa was empowered to sell the property by her husband's will.⁴⁷⁵ George Carroll and wife Alice sold to Susan Ferguson for \$850 a lot on East Street and the Little River Turnpike, 124' x 136', the same lot as conveyed to Carroll by Narcissa Monroe.⁴⁷⁶ This deed was dated July 26, 1899. Susan died less than two years later, an "excellent woman."⁴⁷⁷

Additional records for lot No.15 are listed in the notes.⁴⁷⁸

Lot No.16

Lot No.16 was allotted to Penelope Jackson in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. At the sale of Penelope's lots, son Robert R. Jackson purchased lot No.16 for \$50.⁴⁷⁹ In a memorandum of agreement dated July 18 (28?) 1843 between Robert R. Jackson and Edward Sangster in the suit to sell the lots, Jackson sold to Sangster for \$300

a lot in the Town of Providence known as lot No. ____ in the plan of the said Town adjoining the (?) of Rezin Willcoxen ...

Willcoxen held the west half of lot No.12, which joins No.16 on the north. In the same suit, Robert R. Jackson, as commissioner of sale, declared that

he had executed deeds to the purchasers and that he had sold lot No.16 to Edward Sangster without executing a deed, that Sangster transferred the purchase to A. J. Sangster and Joshua C. Gunnell⁴⁸⁰ in trust for certain purposes

and that the said A. J. Sangster and J. C. Gunnell have sold one portion of said lot to Walter Powell, and the other portion thereof to Edward R. Ford who has since assigned his said purchase to the said Joshua C. Gunnell ...

Jackson, as commissioner of sale, recited further:

At their request he herewith presents to the Court agreements between the trustees of said Edward Sangster and the said Walter Powell and Edward R. Ford relative to their said purchase, together with the assignment of E. R. Ford's purchase to said J. C. Gunnell.

Edward Sangster, as sheriff of Alexandria County, had mortgaged his property for debt. (See discussion of lot No.10.)

Joshua C. Gunnell's house on lot No.16 was described in the *Alexandria Gazette* on October 8, 1859, reprinted from the *Fairfax News*:

Our pleasant village can boast of a goodly number of very pretty private residences, ... but that belonging to J.C. Gunnell, esq., will compare favorably with any private residence to be found in any of our adjoining counties. The House itself is an imposing structure, and the repairs and improvements recently made with a liberal hand by Mr. G., as well upon the house as upon its surroundings, have made it a "perfect love of a home." The late alterations and additions were suggested by a most excellent taste, and faithfully carried out by the mechanics employed for the work.—*Fairfax News*

A 1901 deed recites that George W. and Elizabeth M. Gunnell of Louisa, Lawrence County, Kentucky, conveyed to Walter T. Oliver the southern part of lot No.16 and all of lot No.17 (eight tenths of an acre), at one time owned by Edward Sangster, conveyed by him and wife to Alexander J. Sangster and Joshua C. Gunnell, trustees, sold by them to E. R. Ford March 15, 1859 and conveyed by Ford and wife to Joshua C. Gunnell April 13, 1859.⁴⁸¹ George W. Gunnell, the grantor, was an heir of Joshua. Other heirs and Joshua's widow conveyed their interests to George W. Gunnell.⁴⁸² The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows Walter Powell on the northern portion of lot No.16 (the smaller portion) and Eliza Gunnell on the southern portion and on all of lot No.17.

By deed dated February 23, 1894, Joseph Powell, commissioner in the suit styled *E. R. Ford's administratrix vs. Walter Powell's administrator*⁴⁸³ conveyed to Mildred L., Virginia R., and Martha E. Powell, all unmarried, a house and lot in the estate of Walter Powell, deceased, purchased by him of A. J. Sangster and J.C. Gunnell, trustees in a deed from Edward Sangster March 2, 1859.⁴⁸⁴ A deed was ordered by the court to be made to Powell in the 1857 suit styled *Jackson vs. St. Clair*.⁴⁸⁵ In 1903, Mildred L., Virginia R., and Martha E. Powell conveyed to Walter T. Oliver a fifth of an acre, being the northwest two-fifths of lot No.16, same as conveyed by Joseph H. Powell, commissioner, to the grantors.⁴⁸⁶ In 1934, Kate Brumback Oliver, executrix of Walter T. Oliver, deceased, conveyed to Walter T. Oliver, Jr., Robert Windsor Oliver, and Catharine Oliver Wynne lots No.16 and No.17, or one acre.⁴⁸⁷

Additional records for lot No.16 are listed in the notes.⁴⁸⁸

Lot No.17

In the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots, No.17 was allotted to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased. In the suit styled *Edward Sangster, etc. vs. Jane Ratcliffe, etc.*,⁴⁸⁹ lots No.13 and No.17 were sold to Richard R. Farr for \$485. Farr received a deed dated June ___, 1840 from Commissioners Powell and Sangster. Farr died in 1845. As seen in the discussion of lot No.13, his widow Margaret filed suit in 1848 to sell the lands in her deceased husband's estate. She had contracted with Edward Sangster to sell to him for \$250 the half acre unimproved lot No.17, with a seventeen-and-a-half-foot alley leading to it from the Little River Turnpike through lot No.13. A deed was made from Commissioner William D. Willcoxen to Edward Sangster for the lot and alley in 1848. The alley leading to No.17 from the turnpike was sold in 1853 by Sangster and wife Mary for \$100 to Ferdinand D. Richardson.

By deed dated February 12, 1858, Edward Sangster and wife Mary K. of the City of Alexandria conveyed property, including lot No.17, to Alexander J. Sangster and Joshua C. Gunnell in trust to indemnify Edward's securities who had posted bond for him when he was elected sheriff of Alexandria County. As discussed in the section on lot No.16, the trustees sold to Edward R. Ford. Ford sold to Joshua C. Gunnell April 13, 1859.⁴⁹⁰ All this is recited in the 1901 deed from George W. and Elizabeth M. Gunnell of Louisa, Lawrence County, Kentucky, heirs of Joshua, to Walter T. Oliver

for the southern part of lot No.16 and all of lot No.17. A court paper dated July 5, 1872 reads:⁴⁹¹

To John W. Graham late assessor of lands for Fairfax Co. Feeling myself aggrieved by your assessment of the following tracts of land, You will please take notice that on Monday the 15" day of July 1872 that being July Court, I shall apply to the Court to correct the assessment of the following tract of land, to wit 2 lots situated at Fairfax CH assessed to J.C. Gunnell's estate at the sum of \$3700. which is greatly above its value.

O. W. Hunt
One of the Receivers for
J. C. Gunnell's Est

In 1898, George W. Gunnell had acquired the interests of Henry L. Gunnell and Kate Malone, two other heirs of Joshua, in the half acre (sic) lot described in the deeds as located in the Town of Fairfax on Payne, Court, and Mechanic Streets, and containing a dwelling house and other improvements.

Additional records for lot No.17 are listed in the notes.⁴⁹²

Lot No.18

This half acre was allotted to the heirs of Locian Gunnell, deceased, in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. By court decree at the May 1840 term, Commissioners Gunnell and Love sold a half acre lot to George W. Taylor for \$90.⁴⁹³ Taylor, for the same price, transferred his purchase to Albert H. Bradt.⁴⁹⁴ The deed from Taylor to Bradt describes the property as a "house and lot in the town of Providence now occupied by John W. Graham containing half an acre." Neither this deed nor the deed to Taylor from Commissioners Gunnell and Love identify the lot by number, only that it had been allotted to Locian Gunnell's heirs. In March 1844 Albert H. Bradt conveyed to S. M. Ball in trust for his wife Susan C. [Huntt] Bradt the lot purchased by him⁴⁹⁵ "out of the proceeds of his said wife's estate as one of the heirs of G. L. W. Hunt, dec'd." and was conveyed to him by Commissioners Gunnell and Love. This deed identifies the lot as No. 20, an error. Lot No. 20 was allotted to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel. In the suit filed by Nancy's heirs to sell their lots, the commissioners were Edward Sangster and John Powell, not Gunnell and Love. A deed dated May 9, 1860, from Albert H. and Susan C. Bradt, and William H. Dulany who replaced S. M. Ball as trustee, conveyed for \$600 to Hannah Town the

southern half of a lot on Court Street.⁴⁹⁶ The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows "Mrs. Brott" on the northern half of lot No.18. An 1866 deed from Hannah Town to Sarah Lefevre conveyed, for \$200, a

certain lot of ground in the Town of Providence, adjoining the lot now owned by William R. Chapman and fronting 35 1/2' on Court Street and running back to the lot now owned by A. H. Bradt, being a part of the lot purchased by the said Hannah Town of A. H. Bradt and wife by deed dated May 9, 1860, it being the same lot upon which said Sarah Lefevre now resides.⁴⁹⁷

The *Atlas* shows William R. Chapman on lot No.19, adjoining No.18 on the east.

Aaron R. Lefevre and Mary H. Flower and husband, heirs of Sarah Lefevre, deceased, by deed dated February 1, 1884, conveyed to George W. Hawxhurst, the same property as was conveyed to Sarah.⁴⁹⁸ In 1901, Hawxhurst conveyed to Mary E. Troth.⁴⁹⁹ Troth sold to A. F. Kidwell in 1904. (See discussion of lot No.19.)

Thomas Moore, special commissioner, by order of the court, made a deed to William N. Berkley dated June 23, 1875, for a house and lot "... of which the late Hannah Town died seized, and upon which she resided at the time of her death ..."⁵⁰⁰ The property was described as being in the Village of Providence and bounded on the north by the lot of A. H. Bradt and wife, on the east by Mrs. Lefevre, on the west by Mechanic Street, and on the south by Court Street. Hannah Town died without issue. The suit, filed by her heirs, recites that she had an estate in Massachusetts, but in Virginia only the house and lot at Providence. Her sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews, were her heirs. One of the sisters named in the suit was Sarah Faver (Lefevre?).⁵⁰¹

William N. Berkley and wife Lizzie W. of Alexandria sold to Laura S. Monroe in 1896 for \$800 a house and lot in Providence, the same boundaries as above. Laura was living in the house at the time of the sale.⁵⁰² The 1870 census shows Laura S. Monroe, age twenty-two, Mary E. Monroe, age forty-eight, and Julia Berkley, age thirty-two, living in the same household at Fairfax Court House. The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows Maria Monroe on the same property. William N., Julia, and Maria E. were the children of George Newman Berkley and his wife Eliza Sarah [Monroe].⁵⁰³ Laura S. Monroe was the daughter of James and Martha (Maria?) [Berkley] Monroe.⁵⁰⁴ (An earlier alliance of these two families was the marriage, ca. 1820's, of Barbara E. Berkley, daughter of Benjamin, to Harrison Monroe.)⁵⁰⁵

Additional records for lot No.18 are listed in the notes.⁵⁰⁶

Lot No.19

Richard Ratcliffe, by deed dated December 27, 1820, leased to William Harman a half acre known as lot No.19 for \$35 annual rent forever. Payments were to begin January 1, 1822. The deed included an agreement to set up the necessary equipment for a tannery.⁵⁰⁷ Harman, at his own cost, was also to build on the same lot a dwelling house at least sixteen feet square with a stone or brick chimney. A further provision stated that no tavern or livery stable was to be kept on the lot by anyone except Harman himself.

In 1824, William Harman and wife Anna A. conveyed to Gordon and Robert Allison, merchants, for \$500, their interest in the lot and tannery.⁵⁰⁸ A suit styled *Chichester vs. Allison*⁵⁰⁹ recites that Hiram Carver, in 1824(?) gave the Allisons four notes to purchase a tanyard in the town of Providence, and that Carver supplied the Allisons with leather for the years 1826-1828. An 1826 deed from Carver to William M. Chichester conveyed the tannery in trust to secure \$600 owed to the Allisons.⁵¹⁰

In the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots in 1836, the tanyard was allotted to Patsy Coleman. Her heirs filed suit in 1848 to sell at public auction the lands of which she died seized.⁵¹¹ Commissioner Richard K. Summers, in 1854, conveyed to William R. Chapman for \$200 the property known as the "tan house lot."⁵¹²

Maria L. Chapman, executrix and widow of William R. Chapman, sold to C. M. Newton in 1882 for \$300 a house and lot at Fairfax Court House, part of lot No.19 bought by William R. Chapman of Commissioner Summers in 1854.⁵¹³ Newton, a dealer in stoves and tinware,⁵¹⁴ purchased the western part, a little more than three poles on Court Street and eight poles back along Sarah Lefevre's line. Maria sold the remainder of lot No.19 in December 1882 to Jacob H. Troth for \$750.⁵¹⁵

By deed dated February 10, 1892, Charles M. Newton and wife Willie E. sold to Jacob H. Troth the three-plus poles acquired from Maria L. Chapman in 1882.⁵¹⁶ Troth paid Newton \$50 and assumed a debt Newton owed to A. A. Dewey.

In 1904, Mary E. Troth, daughter of Bleeker Canfield,⁵¹⁷ and her husband Jacob H. Troth sold to A.F. Kidwell for \$1500 three lots in the town of Fairfax:⁵¹⁸

- the lot sold by Maria L. Chapman to Troth in 1882
- the lot sold by Newton to Troth in 1892
- part of lot No.18, sold by Lefevre's heirs to Hawxhurst who sold to Mary E. Troth in 1901

Kidwell mortgaged to E. R. Holbrook to secure Troth.⁵¹⁹
Additional records for lot No.19 are listed in the notes.⁵²⁰

Lots No. 20 and 21

These lots, as well as lots No. 23-27, were evidently added to the town after Richard Ratcliffe's death. They occupied four acres south of Court Street between Payne and East Streets. A plat in the suit styled *Moss, etc., vs. Ratcliffe's exr.*, filed in 1833, shows the land on which the lots were laid off as "disputed property." The bill of complaint refers to "the now laid off lots." Lot No. 20 was allotted to the heirs of Nancy W. Daniel, deceased, and sold in 1840 by court order to John B. Hunter for \$130.⁵²¹ In 1843, Hunter and wife Sybil, daughter of William Deneale,⁵²² sold for \$30 to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church forty by fifty feet, the northwest corner of lot No. 20, to build a church.⁵²³ In 1846, Hunter conveyed to F. D. Richardson and Nelson Conrad, in trust, sundry lands to indemnify his securities as administrator of the estates of Newman, Sybil, and Marmaduke Beckwith, deceased.⁵²⁴ Among the properties deeded in trust was the house and lot in which Hunter lived. These properties were sold by Richardson and Conrad in 1849 to George W. Hunter, Jr., who had paid off and discharged John B. Hunter's debts.⁵²⁵ George W. Hunter, Jr., and wife Mary A. sold the house and lot in 1850 to James Hunter for \$1010.⁵²⁶ The property described in the deed was a one-acre parcel bounded on the south by Henry W. Thomas, and on the other three sides by streets. This would include both lots No. 20 and 21. Henry W. Thomas had acquired lots No. 24 and 25 in 1841.⁵²⁷ John B. Hunter had acquired lot No. 21 from John Powell in 1840.⁵²⁸

By deed dated January 1, 1852, James Hunter and wife Sarah Ann, daughter of Henry Fairfax,⁵²⁹ sold to John R. Taylor for \$1200 a house and lot in the town of Providence formerly owned and occupied by John B. Hunter, the same property conveyed to James Hunter in 1850.⁵³⁰ Taylor sold portions of both lots to Joseph E. Willard, R. W. Monroe, and R.E. Thornton⁵³¹ and took several trusts on the lots.⁵³² He died in 1906. His will devised his property to his wife Fannie B. Taylor.⁵³³ Fannie was to receive all his property, and at her death it was to go to Laura S. Monroe. But Fannie defaulted on the notes, and the lots were sold at auction. In 1907, Thomas R. Keith and C. V. Ford, trustees, with Fannie B. Taylor and Laura S. Monroe, sold the property to John S. Barbour.⁵³⁴

Lot No. 21 had been allotted to Penelope Jackson. After her death in 1837, her town lots were sold at auction.⁵³⁵ Lot No. 21 was sold to John Powell for \$32. The deed to Powell was dated August 12, 1840;⁵³⁶ in the same year Powell and wife Nancy sold, for \$110, to John B. Hunter.⁵³⁷

The church on the northwest corner of lot No. 20 was evidently never built on that site. The deed from George W. Hunter, Jr., and wife to James Hunter in 1850 was for one acre with no mention of a church on, or near, the property. John B. Hunter's deed to the Methodist Episcopal Church trustees for a part of lot No. 20 included a clause for the sale or mortgage of the property by the trustees. Though there is no deed of record for a sale or trust from the church trustees, the deed to James Hunter clearly omits any mention of a church. An 1844 suit styled *Deyo vs. Hunter*⁵³⁸ recites that Joseph and Noah Deyo conveyed to the church trustees (same as named in the deed from John B. Hunter, himself a trustee) a lot on the south side of the parsonage on which to build a church. The parsonage had been conveyed by the Deyos in 1842.⁵³⁹ The trustees were in fact erecting the church on the north side of the parsonage against the Deyos' wishes. The location of the church lot can be seen on deed book plats,⁵⁴⁰ on the west side of Payne Street, opposite and south of lot No. 20, adjoining property labeled "Canfield's trespass on courthouse lot." There is no final decree with the suit papers, but a church did exist there prior to the Civil War. A petition to the Court of Claims was filed by the trustees in 1908 for \$2500 damages to the building; \$1000 was allowed.⁵⁴¹ In 1869, Bleeker Canfield conveyed an adjoining property to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South for \$50:⁵⁴²

being a part of the farm on which the said Canfield resides ... beginning on Ellzey's Church Road at the corner of the old church lot and running with the line of said lot back 59' thence by a line parallel with said road and at right angles with said line 40' thence parallel with the line of said church lot to said road thence with said road to the beginning ...

The conveyance was in trust for the purpose of erecting a house of public worship. Canfield had acquired property in 1866 from Abner Stephenson for \$6600.⁵⁴³ The land was described as two parcels, one containing two hundred twenty acres purchased by Stephenson from Willard Trull in 1856,⁵⁴⁴ and two acres from William T. Rumsey in 1866.⁵⁴⁵ Canfield mortgaged the property in 1867 to William B. Gooding.⁵⁴⁶ The deed from Trull to Stephenson, both of New York State, described the land as containing 223.5 acres less "the lots sold for the parsonage to the Methodist Episcopal

Church and the church lot," being the same tract of land conveyed in 1841 by deed from Catharine Bradley and Richard R. Farr to Joseph and Noah Deyo.⁵⁴⁷ The Deyos had sold to Peter Low in 1852,⁵⁴⁸ and Low, in 1855, had sold to Trull.⁵⁴⁹

It is not clear how Canfield came to be in possession of the church lot. The deed from Trull to Stephenson specifically excepts the parsonage and church lot from the conveyance, presumably because the Deyos had conveyed to the church trustees out of the same tract. The deed from the Deyos to Low also excepts the parsonage and church lots, as does the deed from Low to Trull.

Bleeker Canfield also conveyed a 40' x 50' lot on "Pains Church Road" to the trustees of the Colored Baptist Church in 1870 for \$40 "to erect thereon a house of public worship ..." ⁵⁵⁰

Additional records for lots No. 20 and 21 are listed in the notes.⁵⁵¹

Lot No. 22 and 23

Lot No. 22 was allotted to Locian Gunnell's heirs. By deed dated March 6, 1843, George W. Gunnell and Thomas R. Love, commissioners, conveyed the lot to Ferdinand D. Richardson for \$50.⁵⁵² Three days later, Richardson and wife Mary P. conveyed a two-acre "square" consisting of lots No. 22, 23, 26, and 27 to Richard R. Farr.⁵⁵³ In an 1852 suit filed by Farr's widow Margaret, the interests of her children Rezin and Richard in a house and two acres was sold to George W. Gunnell for \$2025.⁵⁵⁴ The deed to Gunnell, dated March 20, 1854, conveyed the property "designated in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's real estate as lots #22, 23, 26, and 27" same as conveyed by F. D. Richardson to Richard R. Farr March 9, 1843.⁵⁵⁵ George W. Gunnell sold these lots in 1855 to Martha A. Moss, wife of Alfred, for \$2000.⁵⁵⁶

Martha A. Moss of Fauquier County sold to Susan M. Jackson for \$2800 two acres on which Susan was evidently living in 1866.⁵⁵⁷ Susan was the widow of James W. Jackson and the daughter (?) of William F. Moore.⁵⁵⁸ Martha Moss sued Susan for non-payment, and in 1870 assigned the balance of the debt to Reuben Wright, who assigned to Henry (Harry) M. Fitzhugh. In 1879, Fitzhugh purchased the house and lot advertised in the *Fairfax Messenger* and sold at public auction September 16, 1878 for \$2300. The property consisted of two acres, lots No. 22, 23, 26, and 27.⁵⁵⁹ The deed to Fitzhugh was subject to a deed of trust dated June 29, 1876 from

Henry to James M. Love for Alice, Henry's wife,⁵⁶⁰ a daughter of Susan and James W. Jackson.^{561a} Alice appears in the records fourteen years earlier when Union troops occupied Fairfax Court House. On October 2, 1862, Colonel David Thomson of the 82nd Regiment of Ohio Volunteers, wrote to his young daughter Mary.^{561b}

We are yet encamped in the public square of the court house which is full of large shade trees making it an excellent and beautiful camping ground ...It is a beautiful night. A little girl by the name of Jackson either a daughter or neice of the Jackson who killed Ellsworth came to me this evening as I sat in front of a tent near her house and showed me her beautiful doll. They are just from Richmond. The little girl said she was glad to get home. But their furniture and clothes, carpets fences around their house were all taken leaving a dreary home for them ... How would you feel to be obliged to leave home because your father was a traitor and then return ... and find that all we left was destroyed ...

A 1908 plat shows "Fitzhugh" on the same two-acre "square"⁵⁶² though Henry died that year of a stroke.⁵⁶³

Lot No. 23 was allotted to Penelope Jackson in the division of Richard Ratcliffe's town lots. Ferdinand D. Richardson purchased lot No. 23 at the sale of Penelope's lots for \$30.⁵⁶⁴ (See discussion of lot No. 22.)

Lots No. 24 and 25

Lot No. 24 was allotted to the heirs of Jane Moss. Commissioner Thomas R. Love conveyed lot No. 24 to Alfred Moss in 1841.⁵⁶⁵ Lot No. 25 was allotted to Penelope Jackson. Alfred Moss purchased it at the sale of Penelope's town lots for \$34.⁵⁶⁶ On March 31, 1841, Alfred Moss and wife Martha A. sold to Henry W. Thomas for \$450 two lots, No. 24 and 25, in the town of Providence.⁵⁶⁷ Thomas's will, probated in 1890,⁵⁶⁸ devised to his widow for life, and after her death to his daughters Rose, Pinkney, and Margaret, 107 acres, including two town lots. On January 1, 1909, George F. and Margaret T. McInturff and Pinkney T. Bodell, widow, of Washington, D.C., conveyed the 107 acres to John S. Barbour, Rose having devised her interest to Margaret and Pinkney.⁵⁶⁹

Lots No. 26 and 27

Lot No. 26 was allotted to Patsy Coleman who sold, by deed dated April 9, 1838, lot No. 26 and one fifth part of fifty acres adjoining the town to Ferdinand D. Richardson for \$200.⁵⁷⁰ Lot No. 27 was allotted to Penelope Jackson, and purchased by Richardson at the sale of her lots.⁵⁷¹ He then sold both lots to Richard R. Farr in 1843.⁵⁷² (See discussion of lot No. 22.)

Richard Ratcliffe's original town as laid off in 1805 consisted of nineteen lots bounded by West, North, East, and Court Streets with Payne and Mechanic Streets running north-south and Fairfax Street bisecting the town from east to west. By 1833, eight more lots had been added south of Court Street between Payne and East Streets. The town was gradually expanding and attracting new residents. In June 1835, Dr. James Hunter wrote a letter from Fairfax Court House to his friend Dr. William Ashby in Culpeper, in reply to Dr. Ashby's inquiry three days previous. Dr. Hunter wrote:⁵⁷³

You ask me, how does practice flourish? My dear sir, I beg you would not mention - This is the most healthful place on earth - I have had nothing to do for more than a month, nor do I know of any one being sick - nevertheless I must say that I made my *salt* last year ...

By 1860, Providence was a community of several fine brick residences, but it suffered badly during the Civil War. One Maryland volunteer with a Confederate regiment in pursuit of fleeing Federal troops, wrote in his diary beginning July 28, 1861:⁵⁷⁴

... at Fairfax Court house, where we learned for the 1st time their utter discomfiture along the entire road that we passed over ... every foot of ground was littered, covered with their baggage & provisions - They must have thrown away everything & gone to Washington naked. Thousands & thousands rounds of cartridges, all kinds. Knapsacks, arms of every style, and provisions - coffee, bread, crackers, salt, provender & every thing that could be enumerated upon a commissariat's book litterly blocked the way. Wagons & harness for an army of 50,000 men all in our possession. But here in Fairfax CH their fright must have been the greatest, for they left every thing just where they happened to be. We have shirts, drawers, socks ... in thousands, & good clothes are kicked about the streets & all our boys look clean for free in Yankee goods. Lord how our hungry boys did enjoy their good grub. White crushed sugar & coffee, preserved meats & vegetables equal to Barnums Hotel, hundreds of tents, even Yankee officers camp chests with their

wines & love letters. We are living like Lords on their wines, & food for dinner & enjoy their love letters & segars before our evening snooze. No wonder they couldn't fight, they lived too high ... We have taken 2000 prisoners & might have taken 10 times as many ... here we stay probably for some time. The only thing to break the monotony is to read the captured letters & talk to the prisoners that are continually coming in, some captured by our scouts & some of their own choice - Aug 1st 1861 Fairfax C.H. Still here with no news & no excitement, we can't get papers, mail or even paper now to write on, have been on guard since 7 p.m. yesterday in the hardest rain & most vivid lightening I ever experienced, & now 5 p.m. nearly 24 hours, wet & tired, got a nice piece of beef liver for dinner with corn bread & a pipe & tobacco, feel much better, think I shall sleep sound tonight if I get dry. Aug 8 Fairfax C.H. Nothing stirring since 1st save that one of our companies have to march ___ miles every night to piquette duty & we frequently come in sight of the Yankees, visiting at houses they have been a few hours before. Yesterday Prince Napoleon passed our camp under escort from Washington & we gave him 3 cheers & a tiger (real Md which seemed to surprise him). Monday Aug 12 ordered to march to Fairfax Station 4 miles from CH with Tennessee Regt to join our Brigade - We are now in the most woe begone country I ever saw, raining every day for 4 days & we out on pickett night & day. We see no enemy now, though plenty of their desolating tracts for miles around us. The country looks as though a furnace of fire had swept it. Or-chards, fences, cattle, horses, swept by the infernal thieves whose deeds have been worse than the savages, save that they did not scalp ...

Though the war had greatly disrupted village life, it was not long before the town experienced an optimistic renewal. The *Fairfax News* for March 28, 1873 published the following article.⁵⁷⁵

Village Improvements at Fairfax C. H. - Mr. D. B. Ferguson is building a dwelling house near the Methodist Church, on Fairfax street. Mrs. N. Monroe is also preparing to build a dwelling house on her lot fronting on Main street. Thus little by little our village is being built up, and it is to be hoped ere long will be restored to its ante bellum prosperity and size and even go far beyond what it then was ...

We now have four stores, two merchant tailors, one grocery, one bakery, one wheelwright and carriage shop, two hotels, one hostelry, a travelling butcher, two bar-rooms, three schools, two doctors, six lawyers, three churches, with a fourth in expectancy, a brick kiln, a full share of 14th amendments and lots of free dogs; besides being well supplied with wells, and any number of wheelbarrows. We have the

prettiest location, the healthiest spot, and the scarcest of money of any other outside, upside, elevated space on top of the earth. But what especially gives interest and a name to the place is "the public square," full of trees, in the which is situated the clerk's office, the treasury building, the jail and the old Court House, with an unrivalled well outside, and Washington's will inside. Enough said. Quantum sufficit. Glory, honor, ancient Romans, Spartans nowhere.

The 1879 Hopkins *Atlas* shows Fairfax Court House expanded in all four directions to include the Fairfax Cemetery and Zion Episcopal Church on the west, the residences of Thomas M. Moore, Thomas R. Love, and J.C. Gunnell on the north, the Farr, Simpson, and Sager lands on the east, and Duncan Chapel and surrounding properties on the south. The names Providence and Fairfax Court House seemed to have been interchangeable until about 1859 when Fairfax, Virginia, in Culpeper County, was changed to Culpeper. Fairfax then became the name of the Fairfax County seat. By 1904, the Washington, Arlington, and Falls Church Electric Railway, a trolley line, served Fairfax and nearby communities, and, by late 1910, had a depot in the Adams Hotel.⁵⁷⁶ Though Fairfax was first incorporated as a town in 1874, the corporate limits were not established by the Virginia Legislature until 1892,⁵⁷⁷ and confirmed in 1954 at 1626.21 acres.⁵⁷⁸ Sewer and water systems were installed in 1935, and in 1956 the "town manager" system of government was adopted. By 1957 the population had grown to over 6000 people. The town was running out of space. On December 31 of that year, Mayor John C. Wood filed a petition in Fairfax circuit court to annex 5070.15 acres of Fairfax County land adjoining the north, south, east, and west boundaries of the town.⁵⁷⁹ The court approved the petition. The county appealed to the Supreme Court of Virginia which amended the decision of the lower court, awarding the town 2224.90 acres, for a total of 3851.11 acres, effective midnight December 31, 1959. Fairfax became a city of the second class in 1961, with a population of 14,045.⁵⁸⁰

As the town, and the county surrounding it, grew, so did the business of the Fairfax County court. The courthouse was altered and added to almost continuously throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The well was covered by an addition in 1928.⁵⁸¹ The original building was renovated in 1967. A new courthouse, housing the circuit and general district courts, clerk's office, law library, record room, and archives, was completed in 1982. In 1985, the Fairfax County Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) placed a bronze plaque on the original building commemorating its service as "the first permanent courthouse of Fairfax County." A decade later, on June 10, 1995, the Henry

Clay Chapter, DAR, placed another plaque. It reads:

RICHARD RATCLIFFE
1751 - 1825

A Revolutionary patriot and longtime public servant for the County of Fairfax, Richard Ratcliffe donated the land for this courthouse in 1798 and helped make possible the establishment of the town of Providence (now City of Fairfax).

Recognition of Richard Ratcliffe's contributions to Fairfax County is long overdue. Though the plaque does credit him with significant participation in the county's development, it does not specifically mention the many public service positions he held during his long career, and it understates his role as planner of the Fairfax County seat. The plaque hangs in the entrance hall of an addition to the original building, greeting all who seek the services of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations court.

Richard Ratcliffe's courthouse is no longer used for holding court. It is now a Fairfax County Historic Site.⁵⁸²

Notes

ADB = Alexandria Deed Book

FCOB = Fairfax Court Order Book

FDB = Fairfax Deed Book

FWB = Fairfax Will Book

FCFF = Fairfax Chancery Final File

¹ June Radcliffe McReynolds, *Our Radcliffe Heritage: a history of the Radcliffe family in England and Virginia*. Roanoke, 1975:7.

^{2a} Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples: the birth of Britain*. Dorset Press, New York:499.

^{2b} Herbert W. Macklin, Rev., *Monumental Brasses*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

³ Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers: abstracts of Virginia land patents and grants, 1623-1800*. Richmond, 1934. Patent Book 2:200.

⁴ Ibid. Patent Book 5:454.

⁵ Ibid. Patent Book 5:553.

⁶ Ibid. Patent Book 1, Pt.2:82.

⁷ Ibid. Patent Book 1:127.

⁸ Bond from Barbara Ratcliffe to Elizabeth Steele, 1788. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

⁹ FCOB 1770:202.

¹⁰ FCOB 1783:190; 1797 (March 21, 1797:E); 1797 (August 22, 1797:F); 1799:523; 1802:44; 1813:87,254,337; 1816:171; FDB M₂:137.

¹¹ FDB Z₁:470.

¹² Bond ... op.cit.

¹³ FDB D₁ Pt.1:388; FWB A₁ Pt.2:319; FCFF#63w, *Moss vs. Ratcliffe's executor*, (1833); J. H. Sorensen, *William Moxley: Westmoreland County, Virginia*. c1993:15. Statement of Martha Plummer.

¹⁴ Sorensen, op.cit:7.

¹⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, September 27, 1825:3. Obituary.

¹⁶ FCOB 1749:79.

¹⁷ FWB A₁ Pt.2:463.

¹⁸ FDB C₁:55.

¹⁹ *Record of Surveys 1742-1856*:86.

²⁰ FCOB 1756:196,448,681,845; 1768:164.

²¹ FCOB 1754:103.

²² FCOB 1756:222.

^{23a} Beth Mitchell, *Fairfax County, Virginia in 1760; An Interpretive Historical Map*. Fairfax County, Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1987.

^{23b} *Alexandria Gazette*, August 7, 1843.

²⁴ Deed from Ann Radcliff etc. to Philip Dodderidge, 1802. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

²⁵ Loudoun Will Book C:258.

²⁶ Loudoun Will Book D:105.

²⁷ FDB Q₁:402; U₁:316.

²⁸ FDB G₁:155.

²⁹ FDB K₁:416.

³⁰ FDB A₂:186 (plat); Mary Price, etc. to Augustine J. Smith, surrender of lease, 1802. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

³¹ FWB E₁:62.

³² Mary Price, etc...op.cit.

^{33a} FDB D₁ Pt. 1:388; FDB E₁:344.

^{33b} Janice L. Abercrombie and Richard Slatten, comp., *Virginia Publick Claims: Fairfax County*:9. Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims Court Booklets. Iberian Publishing Company, Athens, GA, no date; *Minutes of the Vestry, Truro Parish VA 1732-1785*, Pohick Church, Lorton, VA, 1974.

³⁴ Sorensen, op.cit:15.

³⁵ FWB D₁:160; FCFF#63w, op.cit. (son Robert 21 in 1798).

³⁶ Sorensen, op.cit:15.

³⁷ FWB D₁:160; FDB A₂:268; T. Michael Miller, *Artisans and Merchants of Alexandria, Virginia, 1780-1820*. Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, MD, 1991; Miller,

Alexandria (Virginia) City Officialdom 1749-1992. Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, MD, 1992.

³⁸ FCFF#63w, op.cit.

³⁹ Ibid; FCFF#78m *Ratcliffe's administrator vs. Heirs*, 1843; FCFF#84b *Stewart vs. Fitzhugh*, 1854; FWB W₁:151.

⁴⁰ George Washington, *Diaries*. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, editors. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1972.

⁴¹ FDB Q₁:189,201,204,207,210,212,215; FDB R₁:69,73; P₁192; ADB O:129; ADB D:166,172; ADB E:217; Ethlyn Cox, *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street*. Historic Alexandria Foundation, 1976:160.

^{42a} FDB Q₁:160,163,473; R₁:234,282; G₂:398; U₁:316; X₁:397.

^{42b} FDB D₃:434; Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak* ... Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1977:66,208.

⁴³ FDB R₁:282,283; T₁:337,339,342.

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Fairfax County, Virginia in 1760*, op.cit; FDB A₂:370.

⁴⁵ FDB A₂:370; *Record of Surveys 1742-1856*:247. In 1814, Richard Ratcliffe acquired 120 acres from Nolands, advancing part of his eastern boundary to Pickett Road (FDB O₂:153).

⁴⁶ Bond...op.cit.

⁴⁷ FWB D₁:117.

⁴⁸ FWB D₁:304; FWB E₁:169,172,222.

⁴⁹ Martin Petersilia and Russell Wright, *Hope Park and the Hope Park Mill*. Fairfax County, Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1978:17.

⁵⁰ Ibid:52.

⁵¹ FWB F₁:134.

⁵² Elder Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*. 1810:386.

⁵³ John K. Gott, Baptist Church historian, telephone interview March 8, 1994.

⁵⁴ FCOB 1797 (February 19, 1798:B).

⁵⁵ Ibid. (October 16, 1797:J).

⁵⁶ FCOB 1783:72,290.

⁵⁷ FWB G₁:220.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Ketocton Baptist Association.

⁵⁹ Petersilia and Wright, op.cit:37.

⁶⁰ FCOB 1783:64.

⁶¹ Ibid:190,317.

⁶² William Waller Hening, *Statutes at Large* ... XIII:43.

⁶³ FCOB 1749:191; FDB C₁:314.

⁶⁴ FCOB 1754:194.

⁶⁵ Ibid:436,438.

⁶⁶ FCOB 1756:39,42.

⁶⁷ Ibid:205,315.

⁶⁸ Ibid:314.

⁶⁹ Ibid:345.

⁷⁰ Ibid:687.

⁷¹ Ibid:792.

⁷² FCOB 1763:60.

⁷³ FCOB 1772:126.

⁷⁴ FCOB 1783:41.

⁷⁵ Ibid:93,104.

⁷⁶ Ibid:174.

⁷⁷ Ibid:183.

⁷⁸ Ibid:483,488.

⁷⁹ Ibid:492,493.

⁸⁰ FCOB 1788:85.

⁸¹ FCOB 1783:87; 1788:357.

⁸² FCOB 1788:398.

⁸³ Nan Netherton et al., *Fairfax County, Virginia, a history*. Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, 1978:134.

⁸⁴ FCOB 1788:290-293; Hening, op.cit:79.

⁸⁵ FCOB 1788:290.

⁸⁶ Ibid:291.

⁸⁷ Netherton et al., op.cit:42-45.

⁸⁸ FCOB 1789:29.

⁸⁹ FDB X₁:205.

⁹⁰ FCOB 1783:190.

⁹¹ FCOB 1797 (August 22, 1797:F).

⁹² FCOB 1791 (November 20, 1792:D).

⁹³ FCOB 1797 (October 16, 1797:I).

⁹⁴ FCOB 1749:358.

⁹⁵ FCOB 1754:186.

⁹⁶ FCOB 1756:704.

⁹⁷ FWB O:57.

⁹⁸ *Acts of Assembly*, chap. 37 (1797 session) January 3, 1798.

⁹⁹ FWB G₁:24.

¹⁰⁰ FDB U₁:316; Record of Surveys, op.cit:215.

¹⁰¹ FCOB 1797 (May 21, 1798:I).

¹⁰² FDB B₂:373.

¹⁰³ FCOB 1797 (April 16, 1798:D).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid (April 17, 1798:K).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid (May 22, 1798:N/O).

¹⁰⁶ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:215.

¹⁰⁷ *Alexandria Advertiser*, May 23, 1798:3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid: June 20, 1798:3.

¹⁰⁹ FDB B₂:503.

¹¹⁰ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:231.

¹¹¹ FCOB 1799:488.

¹¹² Ibid:525.

¹¹³ FCOB 1801:229.

¹¹⁴ FCOB 1800 (June 18, 1800:M).

¹¹⁵ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:32.

¹¹⁶ Ibid:26; FDB B₁:78.

¹¹⁷ FCOB 1756:398; Mitchell, *Fairfax County, Virginia in 1760*, op.cit.

¹¹⁸ FCOB 1800 (December 15, 1800:C).

¹¹⁹ FCOB 1772:264.

¹²⁰ Ibid:275.

¹²¹ FCOB 1783:162; FDB P₁:525.

¹²² FDB S₁:82; V₂:136.

¹²³ FDB S₁:422.

¹²⁴ Ibid:82.

¹²⁵ FDB G₂:398.

¹²⁶ FCOB 1788:429.

^{127a} Thomas DiBacco, *Moorefield*. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1977:14-15.

^{127b} FDB E₂:408.

¹²⁸ DiBacco, op.cit:29.

¹²⁹ FWB K:271.

¹³⁰ FWB O:57.

¹³¹ FWB P:395.

¹³² FWB R:14.

¹³³ FWB P:398.

¹³⁴ FWB Z:468,470.

¹³⁵ FCOB 1807:386.

¹³⁶ FCOB 1816:78.

¹³⁷ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:254.

¹³⁸ FDB M₂:285.

¹³⁹ FCOB 1819:31,233.

¹⁴⁰ FCOB 1822:5.

¹⁴¹ *Proceedings in Land Causes #1:68,70-72,75; Record of Surveys*, op.cit:247, 249,255,265.

¹⁴² FCOB 1797 (April 16, 1798:B) : FWB K:62.

¹⁴³ FDB X₁:266.

¹⁴⁴ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:247.

¹⁴⁵ FCOB 1809:26.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid:90.

¹⁴⁷ FWB F₁:70.

¹⁴⁸ FWB E₁:223.

¹⁴⁹ FDB R₁:282,283; T₁:337,339,342.

¹⁵⁰ FCOB 1783:80,224,401,425,447; 1788:388,397; 1791 (November 20, 1792:D;

February 19, 1793:G); 1807:238.

¹⁵¹ FCOB 1807:238.

¹⁵² FWB L:191.

^{153a} FCOB 1783:68.

^{153b} R.K. Headley, *Genealogical Abstracts From 18th Century Virginia Newspapers*:14.

¹⁵⁴ FWB H₁:193.

¹⁵⁵ FCOB 1799:504.

¹⁵⁶ FWB H₁:194.

¹⁵⁷ See FCOB abstracts for Earpe, Caleb, dec'd., admr.

¹⁵⁸ FCOB 1802: 12,49,57,58,315,316.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid:117.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid:155,189.

^{161a} Timothy J. Hills, *The Origins of West End and the Little River Turnpike; Urbanization and Economic Change in Northern Virginia 1780-1820*. Thesis, Master of Arts in History. Washington State University, Pullman, 1993:78.

^{161b} Mayo S. Stuntz, "Development of Postal Service in Fairfax County, Virginia, 1750-1890." The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc. *Yearbook*, v.14:19 (1976-1977).

¹⁶² Hills, op.cit:79, 80.

¹⁶³ Ibid:83.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid:88.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid:89.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid:94.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid:95.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid:97.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid:100,101.

¹⁷⁰ FCOB 1802:310,311.

¹⁷¹ FWB O:57.

¹⁷² Hills, op.cit:102.

¹⁷³ Richard Ratcliffe's slaves are listed in FWB P:395.

¹⁷⁴ *Acts of Assembly*, op.cit. 1804.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. December Legislative Session, chap. 69:44; FDB M₂:137.

¹⁷⁶ FDB A₂:370; Beth Mitchell, *Beginning at a White Oak*, op.cit:168.

¹⁷⁷ FDB U₁:316.

^{178a} 1 pole = 16.5 feet.

^{178b} *The Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette*, Saturday, November 1, 1800.

¹⁷⁹ FWB O:57.

¹⁸⁰ FCOB 1809:387.

¹⁸¹ FCOB 1835:373.

¹⁸² FCFF#97tt *Ratcliffe vs. Helm* (1829); FCOB 1822:43.

¹⁸³ FDB L₂:60,71.

¹⁸⁴ *Ratcliffe vs. Allison*, 1827, chancery suit in Fredericksburg District Court.

¹⁸⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, December 13, 1837; FCFF#521l *Jackson vs. St. Clair*,

(1837); FCFF#98cc *Turley vs. Coleman*, (1848); FDB F₃:161,201,353; G₃:13,15, 253; I₃:87,88,406; J₃:59; K₃:403; T₃:499; X₃:358.

¹⁸⁶ FDB M₂:137.

¹⁸⁷ FCOB 1852:242; the trustees are listed in Netherton, et al.:220.

¹⁸⁸ D'Anne Evans, *The History of the Jerusalem Baptist Church, 1840-1990*. Jerusalem Baptist Church, Fairfax, VA 1990:3.

¹⁸⁹ FCFF#96c *Simpson's heirs vs. Simpson*, (1821).

¹⁹⁰ *Record of Surveys*, op.cit:122.

¹⁹¹ Ibid:243; FCOB 1772:41; 1813:49.

¹⁹² Cordelia G. Sansone, "Coombe Cottage, First Girl's Academy in Fairfax County, Virginia." The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc., *Yearbook*, v.16:25 (1980).

¹⁹³ FCOB 1842:315,317.

¹⁹⁴ FDB Q₄:67; X₄:125.

¹⁹⁵ FDB V₂:152; U₂:426.

¹⁹⁶ FDB S₂:157.

¹⁹⁷ FDB S₂:265,268.

¹⁹⁸ FWB R:13.

¹⁹⁹ *James Allison vs. Richard Ratcliffe*, 1816; *William Allison vs. Robert Ratcliffe*, 1827. Chancery suits in Fredericksburg District Court.

²⁰⁰ FDB X₂:408.

²⁰¹ *Alexandria Gazette*, May 4, 1819:1.

²⁰² FCOB 1813:171; 1819 Superior Court:274.

²⁰³ FCOB 1819 Superior Court: 294, 311, 314.

²⁰⁴ Ibid:114,118,136,143,227,272,379.

²⁰⁵ Ibid:105.

²⁰⁶ *Proceedings in Land Causes* #2:131,132,139.

²⁰⁷ FCOB 1824:116.

²⁰⁸ FCFF#63w, op.cit; obituary, op.cit.

²⁰⁹ Ibid (#63w).

²¹⁰ FDB X₂:358.

²¹¹ FDB M₂:135.

²¹² FDB U₂:426.

²¹³ FDB V₂:343.

²¹⁴ FCFF#74b *Pritchatt vs. Hays*, (1845).

²¹⁵ FCOB 1846:99.

²¹⁶ FCFF#63w, op.cit.

²¹⁷ FDB O₃:207.

²¹⁸ Ibid:209.

²¹⁹ FDB M₂:137.

²²⁰ FDB N₂:21 missing.

²²¹ FDB R₂:412.

²²² FDB Y₂:24.

²²³ FDB H₃:144.

²²⁴ FDB E₃:55.

²²⁵ FDB F₃:204

²²⁶ Ibid:374.

²²⁷ FDB D₃:248; B₃:343.

²²⁸ FDB C₃:326.

²²⁹ FDB M₃:131.

²³⁰ FWB S:267; FCFF#84v *St. Clair's guardian vs. St. Clair, etc.*, (1848); FCFF#104g *Ward, etc. vs. Jackson's heirs*, (1860).

²³¹ FCFF#3w *Bradley vs. Hunt's heirs*, (1841).

²³² FDB B₃:325.

²³³ FDB Y₂:145; Partial genealogy of Richard Ratcliffe's family in notebook owned by Mildred DeBell of Centreville, VA.

²³⁴ FDB A₃:288.

²³⁵ FDB E₃:430.

²³⁶ FDB L₃:252,254.

²³⁷ FDB Y₂:175.

²³⁸ Ibid:80.

²³⁹ FDB Z₂:232.

²⁴⁰ FDB C₃:346,411.

²⁴¹ FDB Z₂:200,202,203.

²⁴² FCFF#63w, op.cit.

²⁴³ FCFF#78m, op.cit.

²⁴⁴ *Thomas R. Love, etc. vs. Thomas Moss*, etc., not of record in Fairfax County.

^{245a} FDB J₃:59.

^{245b} FDB E₂:496.

²⁴⁶ *Proceedings in Land Causes* #2, op.cit:230.

²⁴⁷ FCFF# 3n *Beavers vs. Jackson's admx* (1833); Chancery Suspended File#2b *Burke vs. Hoag* (1856).

²⁴⁸ FCOB 1835:51.

²⁴⁹ FCFF#104p *Willcoxen vs. Willcoxen's admr.* (1854).

²⁵⁰ FCOB 1842:80,318.

²⁵¹ Ibid:149.

²⁵² Chancery Suspended File #2b, op.cit; FDB Z₃:358.

²⁵³ FCFF#45k *Hoag's guardian vs. Hoag*, (1866).

²⁵⁴ *Register of Marriages, 1853-1933*:2, line 46.

²⁵⁵ Netherton et al.; op.cit:302.

²⁵⁶ Robert Manson Myers, *The Children of Pride* ... Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1972:1561.

^{257a} *Alexandria Gazette*, July 21, 1860:3; July 28, 1860:2.

^{257b} FCOB 1863:76,132.

^{257c} *Register of Marriages*, op.cit:3, line 38; Peter R. Henrques, *Fairfax County Medical Society, 1884-1934*. George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 1984:38; Fairfax Superior Court Will Book:163.

^{257d} *Alexandria Gazette*, June 20, 1862; The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc. *Yearbook*, v.14:30.

²⁵⁸ FCFF#45K, op.cit.

²⁵⁹ FDB P₄:109.

²⁶⁰ FCFF#45k, op.cit.

²⁶¹ FWB E₂:372.

^{262a} *Fairfax Herald*, April 29, 1887:4; May 17, 1889:3.

^{262b} *Fairfax Herald*, June 27, 1889:2; June 12, 1891:2; April 29, 1892:3; June 3, 1892:2.

²⁶³ FCFF#97w *Henry B. Tyler vs. Richard B. Tyler*, (1894).

²⁶⁴ FCFF#91c *Swetnam vs. Swetnam*, (1895).

²⁶⁵ FDB T₅:337.

²⁶⁶ FDB K₆:200.

²⁶⁷ *Fairfax Herald*, June 29, 1900:3.

²⁶⁸ Ibid: June 17, 1900:3; June 12, 1908:2.

²⁶⁹ Ibid: July 6, 1900:3; August 3, 1900:3; November 30, 1900:2.

²⁷⁰ FDB D₇:440.

²⁷¹ FDB X₆:418; *Fairfax Herald*, September 24, 1909:3.

²⁷² FDB O₃:315.

²⁷³ FDB X₃:139.

²⁷⁴ *Alfred Moss and wife vs. George W. Gunnell, etc.*, not of record in Fairfax County.

²⁷⁵ FDB T₃:499.

²⁷⁶ FDB U₃:281.

²⁷⁷ FDB G₇:625; L₇:76; W₈:175; Z₉:10; R₁₀:46,49; S₁₀:394; T₁₁:237,304; W₁₃:183; J₁₄:510; 451:471; 474:309; 488:352.

²⁷⁸ FDB M₃:131.

²⁷⁹ Term Papers, Box 1, June 1847, *Coleman vs. Jackson*.

²⁸⁰ FDB B₄:52.

²⁸¹ FDB U₃:139.

²⁸² FDB D₆:407.

²⁸³ Ibid:409.

²⁸⁴ FDB E₆:91.

²⁸⁵ Ibid:612.

²⁸⁶ FDB 423:493.

²⁸⁷ FWB 17:181; FDB 538:180; 647:290; 702:434; 702:412.

²⁸⁸ FCFF#52ll,op.cit.

²⁸⁹ FDB F₃:196.

²⁹⁰ FDB D₃:601.

²⁹¹ FCFF#96d *Lewis Stanhope and Eliza Gunnell, etc. vs. M. C. Saunders, etc.*, (1872).

²⁹² FDB P₄:314.

²⁹³ FDB R₄:293.

²⁹⁴ FCFF#40h *Grigsby, etc. vs. Sangster*, (1859).

²⁹⁵ G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington*. Philadelphia, 1879:73.

²⁹⁶ FCFF#25d *Dewey vs. Ferguson*, (1889).

²⁹⁷ FDB K₅;88.

²⁹⁸ FDB A₆;383.

²⁹⁹ FDB C₅;499.

³⁰⁰ FDB D₄;584.

³⁰¹ FDB F₅;262.

³⁰² FDB X₁₀;559.

³⁰³ FDB G₃;53.

³⁰⁴ FDB K₃;403.

³⁰⁵ *Edward Sangster, etc. vs. Jane Ratcliffe, etc.*, not of record in Fairfax County.

³⁰⁶ FDB G₃;15.

³⁰⁷ Ibid:253.

³⁰⁸ FDB K₃;401.

³⁰⁹ FDB Q₃;557.

³¹⁰ FDB O₅;531; FWB B₂;145.

³¹¹ FCFF#161c *Thomas vs. Blincoe*, (1891).

³¹² FDB E₈;112.

³¹³ FDB K₃;403.

³¹⁴ FDB D₄;43.

³¹⁵ FCFF#15y *Chapman vs. Draper, etc.*, (1867).

³¹⁶ FDB H₃;297.

³¹⁷ FDB X₂;408.

³¹⁸ FDB Y₂;24.

³¹⁹ FDB C₃;326.

³²⁰ FDB H₃;144.

³²¹ FDB D₃;248.

³²² FDB F₃;374.

³²³ FDB B₃;151.

³²⁴ Ibid:325.

³²⁵ FDB Y₂;175; Z₂;200,202,203.

³²⁶ FDB H₃;127.

³²⁷ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 16, 1850.

³²⁸ FDB C₄;140.

³²⁹ *Alexandria Gazette*, January 25, 1864.

³³⁰ Chancery Suspended File #32r *Watt, etc. vs. Watson's heirs*, (1866).

³³¹ FDB J₄;380.

³³² FDB K₄;53.

³³³ FDB J₄;454.

³³⁴ FCFF#3w, op.cit.

³³⁵ FDB I₃;259.

³³⁶ FDB D₅;411.

337 FDB E₅:122.

338 FDB F₆:417.

339 *Fairfax Herald*, August 28, 1908:3.

340 FDB Q₆:626.

341 *Fairfax Herald*, February 1, 1889:3; March 22, 1889:2; May 3, 1889:2; October 9, 1891:3; March 11, 1892:3; June 29, 1900:3; D'Anne Evans, *The Story of Oakton, Virginia, 1758-1900*, 2nd edition. Optimist Club of Oakton, 1991:26.

342 FDB Z₁:174; L₉:315; U₉:207; B₁₀:532; 423:497 (plat); 450:391; 538:180; 702:434 (plat); 703:95; FWB 17:181; 21:120; FCFF#111k *Bradt vs Bradt*, (1909); Benjamin Waters to Spencer Jackson, unrecorded lease, 1847. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

343 FCFF#52ll, op.cit.

344 FWB S:267.

345 FCFF#84v, op.cit; #104, op.cit.

346 FDB E₅:58.

347 FDB G₆:253.

348 *Fairfax Herald*, November 20, 1891:3; May 20, 1892:3; May 28, 1892:2; January 8, 1892:3; April 1, 1892:2; April 15, 1892:3; June 5, 1903:4.

349 FDB M₆:501.

350 FDB L₉:220.

351 *Fairfax Herald*, July 29, 1921:3; June 16, 1922:5; June 13, 1924:3.

352 FDB Q₆:366.

353 FDB E₅:55.

354 FDB B₁₀:532; E₁₁:117; I₁₂:388; S₁₂:289; 423:497; 538:180; 702:434; FWB 17:181; FCFF#103r *Henry Lodge #57, etc. vs. Farr's heirs, etc.*, (1901).

355 FDB N₃:1.

356 FDB J₃:33.

357 FDB G₃:207.

358 FDB N₃:88.

359 FDB T₃:411.

360 FDB C₄:140.

361 FCFF#96d, op.cit.

362 FCFF#40h, op.cit.

363 FDB Z₃:383.

364 FWB E₂:269.

365 FDB R₅:188, 190.

366 FDB A₆:65.

367 FDB F₆:307.

368 *Alexandria Gazette*, August 16, 1900:3.

369 FDB X₁₀:599; Waters to Jackson, lease, op.cit; Malcolm L. Richardson et al., *Earpe's Ordinary*, 1988; T. B. McCord, Jr., *Ratcliffe-Logan-Allison House Historical Report*, 1990; records for Old Town Hall in Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

370 FCFF#52ll, op.cit.

³⁷¹ FDB G₄:460.

³⁷² FDB S₂:265,268.

³⁷³ FCFF#100ii *Windsor vs. Richards*, (1841); FDB F₃:355.

^{374a} FCFF #15y, op.cit.

^{374b} One acre east of the village; FCFF#56j *Jones's heirs vs. Evans' heirs*, (1893).

³⁷⁵ FDB D₄:43.

³⁷⁶ FDB J₄:18.

³⁷⁷ FDB I₃:189; F₃:355.

³⁷⁸ FWB B₂:142.

³⁷⁹ FDB T₄:76.

³⁸⁰ FWB D₂:161.

³⁸¹ FDB G₆:683.

³⁸² FCFF#144j *Moncure vs. Thompson*, (1901).

³⁸³ FDB O₆:578; W₆:545.

³⁸⁴ Henry Campbell Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, fifth edition. West Publishing Company, St. Paul, MN, 1979.

³⁸⁵ *Allison vs. Ratcliffe*, 1816, op.cit.

³⁸⁶ FDB Z₂:200.

³⁸⁷ Chancery Suspended File #2b, op.cit.

³⁸⁸ FCFF#86i *Sweeney vs. Willcoxen*, (1859).

³⁸⁹ FWB Y:65.

³⁹⁰ FDB S₃:226.

³⁹¹ FDB G₃:293.

^{392a} FDB X₃:450.

^{392b} War of 1812 pension application for Benjamin Sebastian. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Abstract in Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

³⁹³ Ibid; FWB Z:159.

³⁹⁴ Chancery Suspended File #2b, op.cit; FCFF#31 *Bradley's heirs vs. Bradley's admr*, (1837).

³⁹⁵ FDB K₆:569.

³⁹⁶ Narcissa Monroe, claim #12739. Southern Claims Commission Report 9, Office No.1608. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Abstract in Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

³⁹⁷ Chancery Suspended File #28c *Stephenson vs. Stephenson*, (1876).

³⁹⁸ FWB G₂:217.

³⁹⁹ FDB V₅:7.

⁴⁰⁰ FDB L₆:497.

⁴⁰¹ FDB P₄:341.

⁴⁰² Ibid:342.

⁴⁰³ FCFF #60n *Lawson vs. Butler*, (1877).

⁴⁰⁴ FDB X₄:324.

⁴⁰⁵ FDB B₅:180.

⁴⁰⁶ FDB D₅:573.

407 FDB K₅:539.
408 FWB E₂:375.
409 *Fairfax Herald*, March 15, 1889; FWB F₂:377.
410 *Fairfax Herald*, December 10, 1910.
411 FDB V₅:7.
412 FDB L₆:498.
413 FDB D₇:594.
414 FDB Y₆:357; M₈:55; Q₉:123; Q₁₀:72; T₁₂:293.
415 Not of record ... op.cit.
416 FDB F₃:161.
417 FDB H₃:140.
418 FWB U:330.
419 FCFF #30t *Margaret C. Farr vs. Rezin S. Farr, etc.*, (1848).
420 FDB N₃:87.
421 FDB H₃:134.
422 FDB T₃:451.
423 FDB L₄:489.
424 Ibid:492.
425 *Register of Marriages*, op.cit:5, line 29.
426 FDB O₄:36.
427 *Register of Marriages*, op.cit:14, line 83.
428 FDB W₄:470.
429 FDB M₄:192; O₄:38.
430 FDB I₅:295.
431 FDB P₆:311.
432 *Fairfax Herald*, October 13, 1893:3; August 24, 1900:3; October 9, 1903:3; September 30, 1904:3; March 13, 1908:3.
433 Peter R. Henriques, op.cit:38.
434 FDB Q₉:63.
435 FDB Y₄:72.
436 FDB A₆:646.
437 FDB Q₉:63,121; A₁₀:464; 447:3; 511:384; FWB 12:14.
438 Not of record ... op.cit.
439 FDB G₃:13.
440 Ibid:65.
441 Ibid:127.
442 Loose Death Register 1881, south district. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.
443 *Register of Marriages*, op.cit:7, line 17.
444 FDB D₅:563.
445 *Register of Marriages*, op.cit:16, line 47.
446 FDB U₅:48.
447 FDB H₆:157.
448 Ibid:232.

449 *Fairfax Herald*, May 22, 1914:1; March 25, 1904:4.

450 FDB P₆:446.

451 FWB E₂:269.

452 FDB R₅:188.

453 FDB D₆:142.

454 FDB V₅:474.

455 FCFF #81f *Rumsey's exx. vs., Thompson, etc.*, (1899).

456 FDB E₇:102.

457 FDB G₇:556.

458 FDB E₇:466.

459 FDB N₁₃:501.

460 FDB I₃:406.

461 FDB K₃:58.

462 *Ibid*:113.

463 FDB A₃:456; FCFF #75p *Pindall vs. Chapman*, (1851); FCFF #4x *Bradley vs. Bradley*, (1840); FCFF #74y *Pindle vs. Willcoxen*, (1847).

464 FDB M3:19.

465 FDB R₃:297.

466 FCFF#75p, op.cit.

467 FDB G₄:488.

468 FDB Q₄:150; Q₆:437.

469 FDB O₅:624.

470 *Ibid*:654.

471 FDB G₄:477; P₄:445.

472 FDB O₅:623.

473 FWB 4:390.

474 FDB F₅:493.

475 FWB Z:159.

476 FDB D₆:276.

477 *Fairfax Herald*, March 22, 1901:3.

478 FDB S₆:538; Z₉:215; A₁₀:28; FWB 21:120.

479 FCFF#52ll, op.cit.

480 FDB Z₃:383.

481 FDB H₆:166.

482 FDB Y₅:542; A₆:460; B₆:198,490.

483 FCFF#32g *E. R. Ford's admx. vs. Walter Powell's admr*, (1885).

484 FDB A₆:630.

485 FCFF#52oo *Jackson vs. St. Clair*, (1857).

486 FDB N₆:469.

487 FDB P₁₁:569.

488 FDB 588:385.

489 Not on record...op.cit.

490 Sangster's trustees to E. R. Ford, 1859. Unrecorded deed. Fairfax Circuit Court

Archives.

491 Term Papers, Box 30, July 1872. Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

492 FDB P₁₁:569; 456:402.

493 FDB I₃:87.

494 Ibid:88.

495 Ibid:89.

496 FDB C₄:199.

497 FDB F₄:436.

498 FDB D₅:269.

499 FDB H₆:68.

500 FDB S₄:370.

501 Chancery Suspended File #30e *Town, etc. vs. Town, etc.*, (1875).

502 FDB W₅:299.

503 FCFF#100dd *Washington and Brent vs. Berkley's exr* (1835): death certificate for Fanny Berkley Taylor, 1915.

504 Death certificate of Laura S. Monroe, 1917.

505 FDB W₂:176; X₂:2.

506 FDB Q₆:178; L₇:396; P₇:320; X₇:164; I₈:178; B₁₀:494; FCFF #112aa *Ballard, etc. vs. Deskins, etc.*, (1912).

507 FDB S₂:157.

508 FDB V₂:151.

509 FCFF#13b *Chichester vs. Allison*, (1833).

510 FDB X₂:75.

511 FCFF#98cc, op.cit.

512 FDB X₃:358.

513 FDB B₅:363.

514 *Fairfax Herald*, July 2, 1886:1. Advertisements through 1889.

515 FDB B₅:585.

516 FDB M₅:36.

517 FCFF#41c *Graham vs. Canfield*, (1902).

518 FDB Q₆:178.

519 Ibid:179.

520 FDB M₅:548; A₇:253; D₇:604,606; L₇:396; P₇:320; X₇:164; I₈:178; G₁₀:442.

521 FDB F₃:201.

522 FDB M₃:134,149.

523 FDB H₃:350.

524 FDB L₃:93.

525 FDB N₃:285.

526 FDB O₃:284.

527 FDB F₃:375.

528 FDB G₃:159.

529 FCFF#441 *Hunter vs. Hunter's exrs*, (1867).

530 FDB S₂:230.

531 FDB K₅:434; D6:227,228.

532 FDB M₆:201; R₆:271.

533 FWB 3:520.

534 FDB X₆:693.

535 FCFF#52ll, op.cit.

536 FDB F₃:195.

537 FDB G₃:159.

538 FCFF#22y *Deyo vs. Hunter*, (1844).

539 FDB H₃:57.

540 FDB U₄:364; N₆:428A-C (plats).

541 Methodist Episcopal Church South, of Fairfax, Virginia, trustees. Claim #13616. Southern Claims Commission. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Abstract in Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

542 FDB K₄:429.

543 FDB G₄:464.

544 FDB X₃:287.

545 FDB F₄:77.

546 FDB G₄:465.

547 FDB G₃:14.

548 FDB S₃:142.

549 FDB X₃:226.

550 FDB L₄:198.

551 FDB C₇:136 (plat); M₁₂:249; T₁₂:162.

552 FDB T₃:499.

553 FDB H₃:141.

554 FCFF#31p *Margaret C. Farr, guardian of Rezin S. and Richard Farr vs. Rezin S. and Richard Farr*, (1852).

555 FDB U₃:41.

556 FDB X₃:140.

557 FDB H₄:21.

558 FCFF#46u *Gunnell vs. Jackson*, (1961).

559 FDB Y₄:148.

560 FDB W₄:44.

561a FCFF#46u, op.cit.

561b Colonel David Thomson, 82nd Regiment, Ohio Volunteers. Entire letter published in The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc. *Yearbook*, v.20:86 (1984-85). Colonel Thomson removed Martha Washington's will from the courthouse. His daughter Mary later sold the will to New York financier J. P. Morgan. The story of the return of the will to Fairfax is told in *Yearbook*, v.2:41 (1952-53).

562 FDB C₇:136 (plat).

563 *Fairfax Herald*, July 31, 1908:3. Obituary.

564 FCFF#52ll, op.cit.

565 FDB F₃:353.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid:375; FCFF#521l, op.cit.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid:375.

⁵⁶⁸ FWB F₂:157.

⁵⁶⁹ FDB C₇:136 (plat).

⁵⁷⁰ FDB D₃:464.

⁵⁷¹ FCFF#521l, op.cit.

⁵⁷² FDB H₃:141.

⁵⁷³ FCFF#4400 *Hill vs. Boggess*, (1808).

⁵⁷⁴ George Harry Weston, Company A, Maryland Volunteers, *Diary*, v.1:44-51, July 28-August 12, 1861. Duke University Library, Department of Special Collections, Durham, NC.

⁵⁷⁵ *Fairfax News*, March 28, 1873:3.

⁵⁷⁶ *Fairfax Herald*, December 2, 1904.

⁵⁷⁷ *Acts of Assembly*, chap. 282, 1892.

⁵⁷⁸ *Acts of Assembly*, chap. 357, 1854.

⁵⁷⁹ Fairfax Law File #7597; *Town of Fairfax vs. County of Fairfax*, petition for annexation, 1958; *County of Fairfax vs. Town of Fairfax*, appeal.

⁵⁸⁰ Fairfax Common Law Order Book 50:664,665.

⁵⁸¹ Ross D. Netherton and Ruby Waldeck, *The Fairfax County Courthouse*. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, July 1977:87; *Fairfax Herald* 5/11/1928:1, etc.

⁵⁸² *County of Fairfax Historic Sites Inventory. City of Fairfax Site #2*.

Lost Tanyards: Rediscovered in Fairfax County

by
Edgar R. Hon

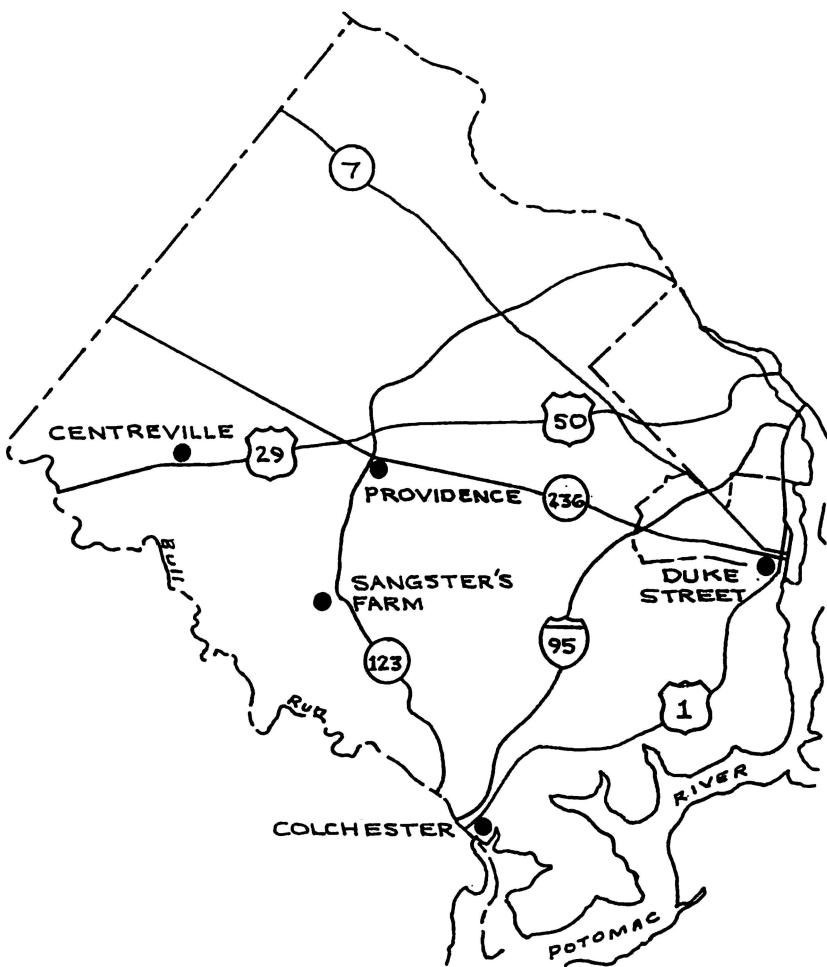
The author, a cartographer, is retired from the U.S. Geological Survey. A McLean resident, he is a member of the Northern Virginia Chapter, Archeological Society of Virginia, and participates in field work undertaken by Fairfax County's Heritage Resources Branch, Office of Comprehensive Planning.

The art or "mystery" as early county records sometimes referred to it, of converting raw, unprocessed hides and skins into leather is known as tanning. The transformation was principally brought about by prolonged immersion in a mixture of water and tannic acid, the latter derived from (in Northern Virginia at least) ground bark from the chestnut oak, though hemlock was widely used in the northern states. Tanning a dehaired hide or skin preserved it against rotting and made it soft and durable. A tanner performed the early stages of the work while a currier did the dressing and other finishing.^{1a}

The tanners and curriers of Fairfax County made leather primarily from the hides of large domesticated animals such as horses and cows, and from the skins of smaller ones: goat, kid, sheep, pig, and even dogs. Wild animals were used as well. In the heyday of the large, sprawling plantations, landowners, tenants, and field hands made good use of leather from ox, deer, beaver, and rabbit. Durable, protective clothing was a necessity.

The uses of leather produced in Fairfax County during the first half of the 19th century were many. Clothing, certainly: shoes and boots, leggings, breeches, belts, caps, gloves, and for those employed in the messier and more hazardous trades such as blacksmiths, glass makers, foundry workers, and even the tanners, protective aprons. Saddles, bridles, harnesses and saddlebags were made from leather, as were water bags, fire buckets, hoses, purses, bellows, drumheads, and military equipment.

There were five known areas in Fairfax County where the trade was practiced: the towns of Colchester, Centreville, and Providence (now the City of Fairfax); the Sangster farm; and on Duke Street at the west end of Alexandria, where a tannery lay on the boundary between Fairfax County



*Map showing locations of known nineteenth century tanyards in Fairfax County.
Drawing by author.*

and the District of Columbia. All were served by the major trade and transportation routes of the day. The tanners and curriers were as important to these communities as the blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and shoemakers, despite the odoriferous nature of their profession, and were encouraged to set up business. Butchers and farmers found a ready market for hides from slaughtered animals, and tanbark from trees cut during clearing of land for farms could be sold to the tanner for cash. The consumer, by buying from a

local tanner, could save by not having to pay transportation costs charged by faraway suppliers.

Evidence that these tanyards once existed is found in deeds, wills, estate inventories, tax lists, newspaper advertisements, and other records. Notices of property sales and invitations to rent or lease give information about location, ownership, and what structures were on the land. The Duke Street tannery appears on an 1845 town map of Alexandria.^{1b} The Centreville tanyards are now appearing in the archeological records. A team of volunteers from the Northern Virginia Chapter, Archeological Society of Virginia, under the direction of archeologist Lawrence Moore, Fairfax County Heritage Resources, has been, since 1991, digging, recording, and analyzing the features and material artifacts remaining from this long-buried and forgotten industry. Despite these evidences, good, first-hand information about them is scant. Not yet found are account books, sketches, letters and diaries, sources that could tell us about construction dates, daily operations, numbers of buildings and employees, and the effects of market forces and the local economy. However, certain features were common to tanyards in the eastern United States and, together with information found in the archival, newspaper and excavation records, we do know what we could expect to see if we went back perhaps 180 years to visit a tanyard in, for example, the town of Providence. We could expect to see the following features:

Bark mill - a horse or steam-powered machine for grinding tan bark into powder or bits;

Bark House (or shed) - a structure for dry storage of bark;

Water - wells, springs, or a perennial stream for soaking, washing, and softening hides and skins; pumps and ditches would be used to distribute water where needed;

Limes, or lime vats - perhaps above ground and made of wood, and in which the hides were soaked in a mixture of lime (calcium carbonate) and water to loosen the hair;

Sweat vat - where hides and skins were exposed to enough warmth to hasten the loosening of hair by slight rotting or fermentation;

Bate - vat containing poultry or bird dung, salt, possibly potash, and water, a mixture used to remove the lime and soften the skins;

Beam house (or shed) - where the hides were laid over padding on a wooden beam (a long, tilted, narrow work surface half-round in cross-section, one end touching the floor, the other propped about waist high) and scraped to and fro with a two-handled, slightly dulled, curved knife to remove hair, fat, flesh, and dirt;

Leach - a container, or series of containers, possibly above ground, and in which the "ooze" (mixture of bark chips and water) is made; tan solutions of varying strengths could be prepared and drawn off for use;

Handler - small pit or vat, filled with ooze, and in which the hides and skins are "handled," that is, worked, or stirred with long, blunt-tipped poles to equalize the infusion of tannin;

Tan (or lay-away) vats - largest in any yard, and where the hides were spread out flat and in layers, each layer covered with ooze and sprinkled with bark powder, remaining here for long periods until the infusion was completely done; vats at Centreville were dug into the earth and made or lined with clay;

Currying house - sometimes called tan and currying house, a structure where the dressing and finishing of leather took place; some of the tanning operation may have been done here, and it may have served as a residence.

There was a tanyard on the farm of James Sangster about three miles east of the town of Clifton. Sangster purchased five currying knives at the sale of the estate of William Huskins of Colchester March 23, 1805.² George Taylor, in a deposition in 1838, noted that in 1836 he was "working in the shop at the tanyard."³ The tanyard is mentioned in a deed from James Sangster to his son Charles in 1832:⁴

Beginning in a line of James Tilletts westerly from the line, then N19° 30'E 13 poles 8 links to a stone thence S71° 30'E 18 poles 15 links to a stone on the Southeast side of the grove around the spring thence Northeast 15 poles 34 links to the Mountain Road thence binding with the said Road to the intersection of the Wolf Run Shoals road to the Corner of the said Tillett's land at a large pile of Rocks Corner to the said Tillett's and Arundels, thence with said Tillett's land to the beginning, containing twenty acres ... also the privilege of water from the spring for the use of the Tanyard.

The Mountain Road was an early route that linked Colchester and Centreville to what is now Snicker's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The name Ox Road, in use today, applied to that portion of the route from Colchester to Wolf Run Shoals Road, so the twenty-acre tract today would be at Butts Corner, where Chapel and Wolf Run Shoals Roads meet Ox Road.

James Sangster served in the 5th Regiment, Virginia Militia, during the War of 1812,⁵ achieving the rank of Major. He served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates 1827-1828,^{6a} and was commissioned a

justice of the Fairfax County court in 1815.^{6b} His wife was Priscilla Ford, daughter of friend and neighbor Charles Ford.⁷ At his death in 1836, Sangster owned 819 acres of land on the Mountain Road.⁸ His grave is in a small private cemetery on Chapel Road.⁹

Charles Sangster probably leased out the tanyard; by 1836 he had moved to Loudoun County, and by the 1850's had migrated to Coshocton County, Ohio. Born in Fairfax County in 1810, he married Sallie Gore of Muskingum County, Ohio in 1845. His livelihood was farming, but like his father he entered politics and in 1857 was elected to the Ohio legislature for two years.¹⁰ The records do not tell us the fate of the tanyard.

The making of leather evidently was taking place in the town of Colchester before the end of the 18th century. A newspaper advertisement appearing in the February 11, 1790 issue of the *Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser*¹¹ announced a need for

...A Tanner, who understands the business properly, and can be well recommended for Sobriety, Industry, and Punctuality, may find Encouragement by applying to Joel Beach in Colchester, Who respectfully informs the public that he will take hides to tan and dress the ensuing season, on the most reasonable terms.

Beach also noted his need for one or two journeymen shoemakers.

William Huskins was another tanner in Colchester. The earliest reference to his tanyard is found in his will made January, 1805, wherein he appointed his wife Mary executrix, stating that should it become necessary to raise money to settle any debts, she may "Sell my House, Lott and Tanyard being in the town of Colchester."¹² At Huskins' estate sale, tanner Robert Lindsay purchased oil jugs (probably tanner's oil, a leather dressing preparation readily available from Alexandria merchants), a skummer (probably skimmer, a tool used in tanning), two fleshing knives, three graining boards, two currying boards, a cannon stove, and six oil barrels. James Sangster purchased currying knives. Andrew Betinger bought a hide scouring table and a lime hook (a long pole with an iron hook at one end used for lifting hides in and out of the lime vats). Lawrence Butler bought fleshing tools. Richard Simpson and others purchased sides of leather, raw hides, damaged leather, and calf skins.¹³ Simpson, the father of widow Mary Huskins, also bought, for L6.6.0, a "lot of ground in Colchester." The location of the lot, purchased in 1806, remains undetermined.

Simpson himself, apparently, was engaged in tanning, but in a small way. His very long estate inventory, returned to court in November, 1820,

listed, in addition to a few rudimentary tools of the trade, small amounts of sides of leather, calf skins, and tanned sheep hides.¹⁴ James Sangster, again, purchased goods at the Simpson sale.

In 1825, Peter Coulter, a tobacco inspector at Colchester and former business partner of George Mason,¹⁵ sold to Jane Petty for \$15 a

certain lot or parcel of land, situate in the Town of Colchester ... commonly called the tanyard lot now in the occupancy of said Jane and containing one acre be the same more or less ...¹⁶

The deed makes no further mention of the yard, but does use the words "messuage and premises," indicating that a dwelling and outbuildings were on the property. Coulter had purchased the lot, No. 27 (one of forty-two lots laid out by surveyor George West in 1754, a year after Colchester's charter as a town) from William Downman of Prince William County in 1792 but there is no reference to a tanyard in the deed.¹⁷ Coulter's involvement in the manufacture of leather remains unclear. Neither his will nor his estate inventory, and subsequent estate sale in 1829, provide any clues.¹⁸

Jane Petty sold the lot in 1854 to James Potter for \$35. The deed noted that it was

...commonly called the large lot now in the occupancy of said James Potter and is the same lot conveyed by Peter Coulter to the said Jane Petty by deed of record.¹⁹

There is no record of Petty's or Potter's activity in regard to use of the land. Tanning, as a business, probably ceased to be worthwhile in Fairfax County by the mid-1800s. The shift from "the tanyard lot" in the 1825 deed to "the large lot" in the 1854 deed seems indicative, but much more so is a sentence in an 1834 advertisement in the *Alexandria Gazette* placed by C. C. Smoot and Company wishing to sell a tanyard in the town of Occoquan:

It possesses a great many natural advantages, there being no tannery a considerable distance from it.²⁰

Colchester was just across the river and only a mile and a half downstream.

In 1800, Richard Ratcliffe placed a long advertisement in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* advising the readers of business opportunities at Fairfax Court House:²¹

I will let to mechanics, on ground rent forever, a few lots at this place—and think (it) is a very suitable situation for a saddler, blacksmith, wheelwright, tanner, shoemaker, &c...

The ad went on to note

...A fine situation for a Tan Yard can be had, where a never failing stream may be conducted to any part, at an expense no greater than the labour of a hand for one day.

In a later advertisement of 1819, Ratcliffe appealed again, pointing out that “Mechanics of the above description must generally depend on the country people, farmers, &c. to be their customers.”²² The offer might have been attractive to a tanner thinking about setting up business here; a town lot near the courthouse, running water, and an established customer base. And, though it is not known that he did, Ratcliffe may have been willing to construct part of a tanyard, if he had not already done so.

In 1820 Ratcliffe had a lessee for lot No.19, today the southeast corner of the block bounded by Main Street, East Street, Sager Avenue, and University Drive. For the yearly rent of \$35 “current money to be paid in Spanish milled Dollars at six shillings each, or in other silver or gold at the present passing value thereof,” William Harman took possession of the half-acre lot “known by the name of the tanyard,” and agreed to “repair and fit up all the necessary buildings, vats, ... for the carrying on the trade and mistery of a tanner.”²³ The use of the word “repair” in the deed of lease suggests that a tanyard had been in existence before 1820 but had fallen into disuse.

It is not recorded just how well Harman fared in his new business, but on May 4, 1824, he and wife Anna, for \$500, transferred their right, title, and interest in the property to merchants Gordon and Robert Allison.²⁴ On the same day they bought 97 1/2 acres from the Allisons for \$975.

Gordon and Robert Allison, in 1825, transferred their rights and interest in the property to tanner Hiram Carver for \$600.²⁵ In 1826, Carver deeded his interest to William Chichester who was security for Carver’s bonds to the Allisons. The deed noted:²⁶

...the lot of land whereon the said Carver now lives ... generally known as the tannery ... together with all the other property real and personal of the said Hiram Carver, consisting of one horse, two cows, three hogs, household & kitchen furniture.

The records of a lawsuit in 1833 shed some light on Carver’s tanning business. Among the evidence introduced in Fairfax County court was a page from the Allison account books which showed that from October 5, 1826, to January 23, 1828, Carver furnished twenty tanned sides of upper

leather (for the part of the shoe above the sole), two sides of horse leather, sixteen calf skins, seventeen kipskins, twenty-six pounds of sole leather, and two sides of bridle leather, all for \$103.31.²⁷ The testimony revealed something of Carver's management style. In a May, 1834 deposition, John Towner, a tanyard worker who lived with Carver, stated that

He (Carver) did not attend to his business, he used to direct me what to do, then he would go off; he worked very little in the tan yard during the time I was with him. I know that he would drink and hunt and I have seen him gamble.

To another question he replied that he had

...heard some customers complain about not getting their leather ... I know he took the oath of insolvency before he left this county of Fairfax.

After Richard Ratcliffe's death in 1825, and following the division of his town lots in 1836, ownership of lot No.19 fell to his daughter, Patsy Coleman. Upon her death in 1848, her heirs filed suit to sell the several properties she had owned,²⁸ and on January 15, 1849, lot No.19 was auctioned off to William Chapman, the highest bidder, for \$200.²⁹ His deed, dated 1854, described it as "the tan house lot."

The Duke Street tannery was located on land partly in Fairfax County and (until the formally accepted retrocession of the town and county of Alexandria to Virginia in 1846) partly in the District of Columbia.³⁰ The land, part of the subdivision called Spring Garden Farm, was on the south side of Duke Street and mostly east of Hooff's Run in an area that became known as West End.

In 1798, tanner Peter Wise advertised in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* that he was willing to

...either rent, sell, or take a partner, who is acquainted with the tanning and currying business...³¹

The property was described as being three acres in size, having a good spring, a dwelling, a bark and tan house, two stories high, with thirty vats and twenty more in frame. Wise noted that there were four hundred hides ready to be worked on and that six cords of bark were on hand. A year later, Jacob Geiger, by then a partner in the business, purchased a moiety (half interest) in the tract and tanyard.³²

The partners sold in 1804 for \$2833 to tanner Robert Kirk who leased the operation to Elisha Talbott and Peter Saunders.^{33,34} In 1810, Talbott and Saunders agreed to purchase the tanyard with payments made in install-

ments.³⁵ In 1816, Daniel McPherson bought an interest in the business, by then known as Talbott and McPherson. By 1817 it had become McPherson and Son.³⁶ In that year, Daniel McPherson became insolvent. The tannery was advertised for sale.³⁷ Noted in the ad were

a dwelling, beam, and bark house, 100 laying away vats, liners (probably limes) ... bates, and handlers in proportion, with fountain pumps, mills &c; the stock in trade consisting of a large quantity of tanned and green leather, hides, skins, &c.

Despite the efforts of trustees Phineas Janney and Nathan Lupton to sell the premises, it remained unsold until 1820 when it was purchased by Thomas Howland.^{38,39} Howland then sold to Alexandria merchant Mordecai Miller.⁴⁰

Miller, in his will made March 1832, just before his death, bequeathed the tanyard and adjoining lots to his son Joseph.⁴¹ He wrote:

Believing my tan yard property to be amongst the most permanently valuable part of my estate, and most likely to increase in value, I do therefore charge it with the payment of an annuity of thirty three and one third dollars to my sister Elizabeth M. Downing, during her life, for her sole and separate use.

Did other tanyard owners view their investments with the same optimism?

Debts incurred by Joseph Miller in other business matters forced him to enter into several deeds of trust with members of his family,⁴² one of whom was his brother Robert.⁴³ Following a decree of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia for Alexandria County in 1843, Robert advertised the tanyard and other properties for sale in 1844.⁴⁴ In addition to a spring-fed water supply, the complex included:

...a substantial brick beam house, two stories high, with four bates; a brick house for breaking hides; a brick stable; a brick bark house, with one of frame adjoining, holding 350 cords of bark; two pools with a head of water constantly flowing into them; 87 lay-away vats; four limes, ten leaches, 14 handlers, the last, all or nearly all under cover, one steam engine of 6 horse power.

In December, 1853, disaster struck. A news account told of a fire

...that broke out on Thursday night last ... at the old brick Tannery, near the Stone Bridge, at the upper end of Duke street. The building was uninhabited, and the frame part of it was soon destroyed ... The fire is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary. The buildings belonged to Samuel Miller, esq. of this place, and his loss is not great.⁴⁵



An excavated tanning vat at the Centreville site constructed of clay. Partially dug vats, separated by clay dividers and covered by protective tarpaulins, are to the left and below. Photo by the author.

Tanning took place in the town of Centreville very early in the 19th century. Two known yards were located within an area bounded by Mt. Gilead Road (then Keene Street), Braddock Road (formerly Main Street), a dead-end gravel drive (once Ralls Street), and a no-longer-existing Adams Street. The area covered four of the town's original 128 half-acre lots: Nos. 21, 106, 111, and 112.⁴⁶ A small spring-fed stream was used for the water supply.

Francis Adams, an early Centreville resident, owned a tanning and currying house combined with a dwelling on lot No. 21 as early as 1803.⁴⁷ An insurance policy sketch of 1805 noted that the tanning house was one story high, made of wood, and measured twenty by forty feet.⁴⁸ After Adams' death in 1811, lot No. 21, along with others, passed to his heirs.⁴⁹ In 1837, the heirs of Adams' son George sold to Alexander S. Grigsby⁵⁰ who sold to Malcolm M. Jamesson for \$1000 in 1841.⁵¹ Jamesson (or Jamieson) operated a tanyard on the property, and in 1847, Fairfax County's Overseer of the Poor bound to him seven-year-old Robert Fenwick "...until he arrives

to the age of 21 years to learn the Tanning business.”^{52a} Jamesson was in debt to his brother William, a naval officer, for \$6000 for support since the death of their father ca.1812 when Malcolm was nine years old.^{52b} In 1851, he mortgaged his property to secure the debt.^{53a} Among the considerable real and personal estate placed in trust—farm acreage, town lots, a store and stable, livestock, household goods—was the tanyard, along with bark and leather. The debt was evidently satisfied. In 1876, Jamesson wrote his will, bequeathing a large amount of property to his children.^{53b} In 1901, 116 1/2 acres were sold and the proceeds divided among Jamesson’s heirs.⁵⁴ Jamesson had died a widower in 1884. He had been blind and unable to carry on his trade as a tanner since 1852.

Daniel Harrington was another early tanyard owner in Centreville. In 1804 Harrington purchased a parcel of land for \$600 from Thomas and Susannah Millan.⁵⁵ Although the lot number is not mentioned, the description in the deed would place it on No.112. It reads:

...Beginning at the south corner of said piece or parcel of land on the main street of said town and running a strait course with Keene’s Street one hundred and forty four feet to Harrington’s tan yard, thence seventy two feet northwest with said Harrington’s tan yard line, thence once hundred and forty four feet a southwest course to the main street ... thence fifty six feet with said main street to the beginning.

By the description, the tanyard lay on all or part of lot No.111, now along the northwest side of Mt. Gilead Road.

In April 1806, Daniel and Mary Harrington mortgaged the property to Samuel Craig to secure debts due Alexandria merchant John Ladd.⁵⁶ The deed, which describes a larger area than the above, notes:

The aforementioned piece of ground has on it the house and outhouses at present occupied by said Harrington for a dwelling House, store, granary, stable, saddlers shop, tan yard, and buildings thereon.

(The dwelling is the present Harrison House at the corner of Mt. Gilead and Braddock Roads.) The Harringtons evidently defaulted. The property was advertised in 1807,⁵⁷ and sold in 1812. One deed, conveying Harrington’s house and lot to Philip Triplett, described the land as

Beginning at the corner of the west side of Keen’s Street back one hundred and forty three feet to the tan yard formerly sunk by said Harrington (now the property of John Buckey)...⁵⁸

Buckey’s Tanyard was evidently still in operation in 1840.⁵⁹ Archeological investigations, directed by archeologist Lawrence Moore, uncovered and

excavated a circular, five-foot-deep tanning pit here in 1991. Interestingly, the soil at the bottom, after analysis, was found to contain fatty acids from sheep.⁶⁰

Others tried their luck at the tanning trade in Centreville. At the sale of the estate of George Grimes, the report of which was returned to court in 1828,⁶¹ George Lane purchased forty sides of sole leather, ninety-five sides of upper leather, twenty kip skins, fourteen sides of horse leather, a skimmer, tan bark, and a dollar's worth of dog skins. Grimes, at his death, owed \$60 rent for a tanyard, location uncertain, for the years 1826 and 1827.

Leather-making, both as a trade and as a business, appears to have substantially died out in Fairfax County by the 1850s. Unlike Delaware and New England, for example, there is no outstanding history of it here; no large factory complexes run by competitive, entrepreneurial owners willing to invest capital in mechanical equipment and plant expansion, to try innovative methods and new processes to hasten leather to market. Equipment, based on what little appears in the estate records, was rudimentary. Other than the Duke Street operation, perhaps none utilized steam-powered bark mills or hide-splitting machines. In Fairfax County, tanneries were mostly composed of rows of earthen pits and a few wooden sheds next to a dwelling and workshop—accessories, however important, to a predominantly agricultural society.

Although the evidence is thin, the demise of Fairfax County's tanneries can probably be attributed to several factors: the decline of the towns of Colchester and Centreville, debt, mismanagement, unwillingness to adopt new methods and equipment, migration, and competition from foreign imports and lack of protective tariffs. There might also have been complaints from townspeople about the odors and waste disposal habits associated with tanyards of the day. Other factors were an unstable economy and the social environment which led to the Civil War.

By 1850, the curtain was lowering on the last act of this occupational way of life in Fairfax County. No tanneries were listed for the county in the U.S. Census for Industry that year. In contrast, fortune was on the upswing for a big competitor, the Charles C. Smoot Company, a leather-making factory in Alexandria.⁶² Founded in 1820 on the ashes of another's bankruptcy by a member of the influential and successful Smoot family, the business thrived, and in 1850 the Census noted that it had ten employees, steam power, and a \$24,000 capital investment. By the late 1800s it had a bark-and-wood station at Rapidan, Virginia, a branch tannery at Sperryville and, just before the turn of the century, an operation in North Carolina. The

business continued well into the 1900s. It had entered the Age of Industrialization, adapted, competed, and survived. Clearly, then, the local manufacture of leather had undergone a change as the factory replaced the antiquated, and eventually unprofitable, ways of the past.

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Notes

ADB = Alexandria Deed Book

FWB = Fairfax Will Book

FDB = Fairfax Deed Book

FCFF = Fairfax Chancery Final File

FCOB = Fairfax Court Order Book

^{1a} See Bibliography.

^{1b} Maskell C. Ewing. "Plan of the Town of Alexandria, D.C." 1845. Reproduced in *The Cartography of Northern Virginia*, plate 31. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1981:45.

² FWB J₁:139.

³ FCFF#93e *Tillett vs. Sangster's administrators*, 1838.

⁴ FDB A₃:243.

⁵ War of 1812 Pension Applications transcribed from originals in the National Archives, Washington, D.C. Transcriptions in Fairfax Circuit Court Archives.

^{6a} Nan Netherton. "The Fairfax County Representatives to the General Assembly of Virginia, 1742-1981." The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc. *Yearbook*, v.20:74.

^{6b} FCOB 1829 (front of book).

⁷ FCOB 1807:229.

⁸ Fairfax County Land Taxes, 1835.

⁹ Brian A. Conley. *Cemeteries of Fairfax County, Virginia*. Fairfax County Public Library, 1994:17.

¹⁰ N. N. Hill, Jr. *History of Coshocton County, Ohio: Its Past and Present, 1740-1881*. A. A. Graham and Company, OH, 1881.

¹¹ February 11, 1790.

¹² FWB I₁:390.

¹³ FWB J₁:139; Edith Moore Sprouse. *Colchester: Colonial Port on the Potomac*. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, March, 1975.

¹⁴ FWB M₁:102.

¹⁵ FCFF#12v *Coulter's executors vs. Mason's administrator's*, 1837.

¹⁶ FDB W₂:120.

¹⁷ FDB Z₁:285.

¹⁸ FWB P:242; FDB Q₁:27; FDB S₁:229.

¹⁹ FDB U₃:192.

²⁰ October 7, 1834.

²¹ November 1, 1800.

²² *Alexandria Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, August 7, 1819.

²³ FDB S₂:157.

²⁴ FDB V₂:148.

²⁵ FDB W₂:234.

²⁶ FDB X₂:75.

²⁷ FCFF#13b *Chichester vs. Allison*, 1833.

²⁸ FCFF#98cc *Charles W. Turley vs. George W. Coleman*, 1848.

²⁹ FDB X₃:358.

³⁰ John D. Macoll, ed., *Alexandria, a Towne in Transition, 1800-1900*. Alexandria Bicentennial Commission and Alexandria Historical Society, 1977:4.

³¹ February 8, 1798.

³² FDB B₂:284.

³³ ADB H:121.

³⁴ *Alexandria Daily Gazette Commercial & Political*, January 24, 1809.

³⁵ ADB U:229.

³⁶ FDB R₂:23.

³⁷ *Alexandria Daily Gazette Commercial & Political*, March 18, 1817.

³⁸ *Alexandria Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, June 18, 1819.

³⁹ ADB K₂:65; ADB I₂:115.

⁴⁰ ADB K₂:71.

⁴¹ FWB Superior Court:62.

⁴² FDB E₃:451.

⁴³ FDB G₃:85.

⁴⁴ *Alexandria Gazette*, March 27, 1844.

⁴⁵ *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, December 10, 1853.

⁴⁶ Eugenia B. Smith. *Centreville, Virginia: Its History and Architecture*. Fairfax County Office of Comprehensive Planning, 1973:30.

⁴⁷ Ibid:40.

⁴⁸ Laura Davis. “The Tanyard, a Sporadically Published Update on the Centreville Site.” *Newsletter*, v.1, No.2:2.

⁴⁹ FWB K:62.

⁵⁰ FDB E₃:342.

⁵¹ FDB G₃:342.

^{52a} FCOB 1846:49.

^{52b} FCFF#97o *Matthews vs. Jamesson*, 1852.

^{53a} FDB P₃:422, 433.

^{53b} FWB H₂:38.

⁵⁴ FCFF#90i *Smith vs. Jamesson*, 1901.

⁵⁵ FDB E₂:519.

⁵⁶ FDB G₂:366.

⁵⁷ *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, March 17, 1807.

⁵⁸ FDB L₂:426.

⁵⁹ FDB F₃:211.

⁶⁰ Carol D. Friedman. “The Importance of Sheep in Fairfax County History.” The Historical Society of Fairfax County, VA, Inc. *Yearbook*, v.22:70.

⁶¹ FWB P:136.

⁶² William Francis Smith. “The Smoot Tannery.” *The Fireside Sentinel*. Lloyd House, Alexandria, VA, v.IV, No.12, December 1990:137.

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